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GODS AND MEN

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Race Relations In Negro Africa

Family And Kin In Indo-European Culture

After A Century And A Quarter

GODS AND MEN

BY

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"Let us, then, if you please, in the first place announce to them [Gods] that we are not enquiring about them; we do not presume that we are able to do so; but we are enquiring about the meaning of men in [imagining their forms and worshipping them]."

Adapted, with apologies to the spirit of Socrates, from Plato's *Cratylus*.

"It would be well if we of the modern world as we look back over these ages [five thousand years] lying behind us might realize that religion is still in the making, that the processes which brought forth inherited religion have never ceased, that they are going on around us every day, and that they will continue as long as the great and complex fabric of man's life endures."

J. H. Breasted: *Development Of Religion And Thought In Ancient Egypt.*

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PREFACE

Post-Hiroshima period has revealed the potentialities of nuclear technology. The climate accompanying the revelation has been charged with religiosity over a large part of the civilized world. In 1954 the Press Trust of India reporter flashed the news from Tokyo that more and more Japanese men were turning to God, attributing the phenomenon to business depression. The *Times of India* published the news in its issue of October 28. There were then some 200000 shrines, temples and churches in Japan catering to the religious needs of the Japanese. In the same year the first Kumbha-mela fair to take place at Allahabad (Prayag) after our Independence drew more than one hundredth of India to the place. Among the visitors and pilgrims figured not only the President of my country but also Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. In 1955 the British economist Colin Clark, pondering over the phenomenon of increasing birth-rate in Europe, where till a few years before there had been a hue and cry over declining birth-rate, opined in the Journal of the Royal Statistical Society that it was an evidence of the people's religious conviction. For about six months in the year 1956 the Government of India, which being secular has no official religion, celebrated the 2500th Buddha Jayanti or the birth anniversary of Buddha. Its Publications Division brought out some thirteen publications on the occasion dealing with various aspects of Buddha and Buddhism. A copy of one of them, *2500 Years of Buddhism,* was presented to the President of the Republic at a special function. In December 1961 the third assembly of the World Council of Churches was held in New Delhi. *The Times of India* in its issue of December 4 commenting on the occasion and the scheduled address of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to it stated: "Mr. Nehru, who long proclaimed himself an atheist, has in recent years often referred to the need for spiritual element in a world confused and endangered by political tensions and tremendous technological change." The assembly itself was described as "the greatest gathering of Christians since the 16th century"

(*Time*, Dec. 8). Increase or decrease in the volume and intensity of religiosity in relation to the climate of an age is one aspect of the sociology of religion. And its illustrations are available in the religious histories of many nations.

The special contribution which the rich, ancient and peculiar religious beliefs and practices of the Hindus can make to the sociology of religion led me some years ago to investigate the genesis, development and organization of asceticism among them. I published the results of my enquiry in this till-then-neglected field of social history of India in 1954 in my book entitled *Indian Sadhus*. In that field of the sociology of religion as I pointed out, Indian or Hindu contribution, though more ancient and varied, is shared with some other great religions of man. And I turned my attention to a field of the sociology of religion in which Indian or Hindu contribution is bound to be unique. It is the nature of the Hindu ideas of Godhead that makes possible the uniqueness of the contribution. I began to explore the field with a view to discovering the relations, if any, between the climate of an age and the type of Godhead favoured. The results of this exploration are presented in this book.

The early and speedy publication of it is made possible by the help of two persons. My Manipuri pupil Shri Kunj Bihari Singh put the manuscript speedily in type and my enthusiastic and enlightened publisher passed the typescript with alacrity through the press. Shri Singh has further obliged me by adding the index.

University Campus,
Bombay-1.
12*th December*, 1961.

G. S. GHURYE

"प्रहिणोतु देवः सविता धियो नः"

(Prahiṇotu Devah Savitā Dhīyo Nah)

1

NON-ETHNIC DEITY: A NATURAL INSPIRER

"Men" said Aristotle, "imagine not only the forms of the gods but their ways of life to be like their own."[1] About two centuries before him a rationalist compatriot of his had opined that not only had men made gods in their own image but even animals like horses and oxen would make their gods horse-gods and oxen-gods respectively if they could fashion their gods at all.[2] The rationalist was thus even more certain of the god-making process being confined within the racial form and experience of the god-makers. In so far as these opinions of the Greek thinkers postulated that man would not go out of his kind to select his gods from, they were, even for their time, based on a *priori* and very partial knowledge.

The ancient Egyptians are believed to have arrived at some sort of a concept of One God.[3] But as John A. Wilson points out they were not monotheists but were "monophysites: many men and many gods, but all ultimately of one nature."[4] They had a very large number of animal-gods in their pantheon many of whom confront modern students of religion and society in general and of Egyptology in particular in their weird and colourful forms.[5]

Wilson has appropriately distinguished the principle on which the ancient Egyptian thinker and religiosophe (?) accommodated seemingly contradictory or even absurd notions as that of consubstantiality. The difference of substance between gods, men and other elements in the universe in reality did not exist.[6] Therefore "a god might be depicted as a man, or as a falcon, or as a falcon-headed man. In one context the king is described as the sun, a star, a bull, a crocodile, a lion, a falcon, a jackal." "There was thus a continuing substance across the phenomena of the universe, whether organic, inorganic or abstract."

In Indo-European culture the idea and acceptance of ani-

mal-gods is curiously confined to the two easternmost branches, the Iranian and the Indian. Among the Iranians 'Veretraghna,' a deity, though not the highest in their pantheon, which is linguistically cognate with 'Vritraghna,' Indra, the killer of the demon 'Vritra,' of the Rigvedic Indians, was represented as going through a series of incarnations not necessarily in human form. In one of such incarnations 'Veretraghna' was incarnate as a camel.[7]

Further west the older records of the Indo-European empire-builders, the Hittites, do not reveal any animal diety. The gods of the Hittites and other cognate people of the region had female consorts, sons and daughters and even grand-daughters, all too human. Many of the gods had a sacred animal peculiar to each, on which they are represented as standing. The only non-human features, sometimes present, are wings and such other adjuncts added to the human forms.[8]

The Indian Aryans even in their earliest literature have recorded gods or rather godlings whose exact nature and form have been debated for over half a century. The deities are named 'Vrishakapi', 'Man-ape', 'Aja Ekapad', 'One-foot God' and 'Ahi Budhnya', Serpent of the Depth'.[9] The last two are definitely declared to be composite; and theriomorphism is considered as one of the strands of the fabric of Vedic religion[10] —the earliest recorded religion of India. All the three appear in Epic mythology of later days as three of the Rudras who number eleven and form members of the group of thirty-three gods.[11]

Theriomorphism, postulation of animal-form gods, is seen to gain ground as Indian culture and religion developed on the Indian soil. In the later Vedic age, even before the formulation of Epic mythology we come across the rudiments of the mythology that later provided one of the three Supreme gods of the Hindu pantheon with animal-form incarnations and manifestations. In later mythology one of the forms in which the great god Vishnu is figured is the horse-necked or

* This vedic deity, whatever its precise nature, must have continued to receive attention and to be current in Indian culture for a long time. For Panini, who lived before 300 B.C., has, under IV, 1, 37, explained grammatically the form of the name of the consort of that deity as 'Vrishakapayi.

faced manifestation, giving Him the appropriate name of 'Hayagriva.' The myth is clearly implied in a tale narrated in the *Brahmanas*.[12] Of the standard ten incarnations of Vishnu four are animal-human forms, viz. Fish, Tortoise, Boar and Man-Lion. Of these at least one, Boar incarnation, is already foreshadowed in the Vedic literature.[13]

Vishnu is one of the three great gods whom E. W. Hopkins has rightly designated as the Supreme Gods.[14] The growth of theriomorphism in Indian religion was rendered feasible by the doctrine of the immanence of God which in the hands of Lord Krishna as expounded in the *Bhagavadgita* develops into identification of the Supreme God with any object, material, immaterial or ideational which is the best of its class. Lord Krishna says[15] "Every excellence of its class is my manifestation. I am not only Vasudeva of the Vrishnis or Sankara of the Rudras but also the famous horse Ucchaisravas, Airavata among elephants, Lion among beasts and so on to *Ficus Indica* among trees." Here in Indian religion instead of the doctrine of consubstantiality of the ancient Egyptians we have the doctrine of immanence leading to the same result, viz. raising of animals to godhead.

If one of the three Supreme Gods could have four of his forms cast in the animal shape small wonder that among the fast-growing number of secondary and tertiary gods whose number has finally grown from thirty-three to thirty-three crores or three hundred thirty millions—the animal-form gods increased, as for example, the 'ganas' or 'group-followers' of Sankara or Siva.

This therianthropic* impulse had gone deeper than that. The strengthening philosophical source was the impulse to rationalize the animistic features of the folk religions of the country. This impulse and tendency in their turn stemmed from the slow but steady process of ethnic integration into a complex culture-pattern, known to later generations as Brahmanism.

The three Supreme Gods, Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva of

* The forms given to these deities are composite and are better described by the term therianthropic rather than by theriomorphic—therianthropic meaning animal-man, partly animal, partly man like the well-known Boar or Man-Lion incarnation of Vishnu.

the Brahmanic mythology were provided with three animals, which served as their mounts or vehicles and were described as their banner-emblems. Brahma's special animal was swan, eagle being that of Vishnu and bull of Siva. Of these 'Garuda', the vehicle of Vishnu, came to be represented as half-human and half-bird. Its worship led to erecting shrines over it in some parts of the country. Both the animal-deities, Bull and 'Garuda', regularly figure in front of their masters in temples dedicated to them. Siva and his bull, however, appear more inseparable, for Siva is worshipped in only one incarnation of his of the selfsame name, though others are predicated of him in the religious literature.

Vishnu, more often, has come to be worshipped in different incarnation-idols and even in other forms specially installed in Vaishnavite temples. The two most commonly worshipped incarnations are Rama and Krishna. The latter has no special mount and the former's chief servant, serving as vehicle when needed, is the half-human ape, Hanumat or Maruti. Maruti, the ape-deity, perhaps representing in Brahmanic culture theriomorphic 'Vrishakapi' of the Rigvedic era, has come to have a special significance, all too his own, as he has been kept out of the ideal complex of deities formulated by and accepted in the syncretic era of Brahmanism.

There is still one more deity, the romance of whose rise to godhood is the subject matter of another chapter, which is therianthropic. And it rose to be a godhead without ever having been the vehicle of any of the deities, the supreme gods or the minor ones. Its rise too is phenomenal as it has succeeded in getting itself installed in the complex of Five Deities, 'Pancha-deva' in Samskrit and 'Ainjandideva' in Tamil. The deity is known as 'Ganesa' or 'Ganapati', the lord of the 'ganas' or hordes.

The complex of Five deities, 'Panchadeva' or the pentad is formed by 'Surya', the sun, 'Siva', 'Vishnu', 'Devi' and 'Ganesa'. The syncretic endeavour quite clearly must have started at a time when Brahma, one of the triad of Supreme Gods, had fallen out of favour.

The function attributed to Brahma is that of creation. Creation having been achieved, in a culture which had also to incorporate the notion of Creation as a result of sacrifice,

such a deity would tend to fall out of favour. Added to this natural tendency of a culture that was grappling with deeper concepts about future life there was the mythological fact of Brahma's weakness creating numerous problems for the other Supreme Gods.

Brahma, like Siva and Vishnu, had a wife. Significantly her name is Savitri. Now Savitri can be a derivative from the word 'Savitri', the sun; and the famous prayer addressed to the Sun invoking it to bestow on the suppliant the blessing of energizing his intellect, which is, because of its metre called 'Gayatri', was also called 'Savitri'. So much so was it the case that the rite of 'upanayana', at which a person received initiation into the recital of this prayer, had come to be known as 'Savitri', as in the expression 'Savitri-patita', a person fallen from 'Savitri' i.e. a person on whom the rite of 'Savitri' was not performed. The formula is declared to be unsurpassable and the highest Brahma itself. Even as early as the *Brihadaranyakra Upanishad,* which is one of the two oldest and thus may be assigned to the eighth or the ninth century B.C., this mystic attitude towards the spiritual significance of 'Gayatri' or 'Savitri' is noticed.[16]

The sun is too concrete an object to be easily metamorphosed into any image. Yet when the believers work with religious or wondering spirit in an age, when what is called magic could be the only approach to the supernatural will, even the effulgent sun has to yield. Rayed disc suggests itself as its direct symbolic representation. From that to a lotus is a transition requiring one or more steps, but is one achieved in India. In the folk representation of the sun drawn with powders in Karnatak, for example, at a 'Surya' festival, it is drawn as two equilateral triangles placed one over the other so that a six-pointed star-like figure is formed. In the central hexagonal space the mystic syllable 'Om' is then drawn and the whole figure is offered worship. The earliest representation, those on the tribal coins, is a wheel or a disc.[17]

In this connection the formula and procedure for 'Ravikalpa', sun-propitiation, laid down in *Baudhayanagrihyaseshasutra* (III, 8) is interesting. A circle or a four-cornered low platform made with cowdung is prescribed for the propitiation-rite; and its performance even on one Sunday is guaran-

teed as its fruit complete recovery from tuberculosis or leprosy. This work quotes the famous text on simple worship and approach to God recommended by Lord Krishna in the *Bhagavadgita* verbatim introducing it with the formula "so said Bhagvan or the Lord." It is therefore later than 200 B.C.[18]

In Valmiki's *Ramayana* (VI, 105, 2-27) on the eve of the final attack made by Ravana, Rama was taught by Agastya, in a miraculous presentation, the incantationary formula known as 'adityahridaya' 'sun-heart'. He was assured of complete success after its repetition thrice before actually engaging in the fray. Rama is represented as having done so.

The other representation of Surya is anthropomorphic. Though even in the *Rigveda* Surya is given human traits which were much elaborated in Epic mythology, the earliest anthropomorphic representation of the deity is the work of the Iranian Parthians or other foreign tribes that entered India after the 1st century B.C. R. G. Bhandarkar opined that the famous temple of the sun at Multan, now in West Pakistan, was erected in the reign of the great Kushan King Kanishka. The earliest known temple dedicated to this deity in India proper was built about 440 A.D.[19] where also occurs the earliest invocation to the sun. Invocations to the sun by itself are rare in the records and literary productions, though three generations of the Vardhana dynasty of Thanesvar before the great Harsha turned to Buddha, were devotees of the deity. The above-mentioned temple was situated at Mandasor in Gwalior district and it is interesting to record that the next historically authenticated temple of the deity, ascribed to the first quarter of the 6th century, was erected at Gwalior in the reign of the Huna ruler Mihirakula.[20]

Temples of the Sun-god, all between the 7th and the 13th century, culminating in the famous temple of Konarak in Orissa, known to European travellers as the Black Pagoda, range from Kashmir to Gujarat, north-west Maharashtra and Bengal. The known images of these northern temples—northern as opposed to those in the Tamilnad, were dressed in a peculiar attire associated with the Indo-Greeks and Kushans: high cap for the head, longish coat fully-buttoned up on the

body and trousers and high goloshes-type boots on the legs and feet.

In southern India no known temple of sun appears to have been reported from Karnatak, Kerala and Andhradesa. Image of Surya is clad in the traditional pattern of Hindu gods[21] and at least in one famous temple is a three-headed human form. Such an image of Surya is enshrined in the great temple of Nataraja at Chidambaram in South Arcot district.[22] The great temple would appear to have been erected before the 10th century and the additions perhaps towards the end of the tenth or the beginning of the eleventh century. In another temple, that of Kachchapesvara at Kanchi, there is a votive pillar ascribed to the 11th century A.D. which has inscribed on it the first six of the hundred verses sung by the Samskrit poet Mayura, a relative of the more famous Samskrit litterateur Bana.[23] Mayura who lived about the middle of the 7th century A.D., we are informed had addressed the verses as his prayer to the sun-god in order to get relief from leucoderma which had disfigured him. Skin diseases it would appear were the special preserve of the sun-deity.

The most important temple of this deity, however, must be the one at Suryanarkoil, which means the temple of Surya Narayana—it should be borne in mind that in Maharashtra it is customary to refer to the sun-deity in that manner, signifying the Supreme God-head. The place is about two miles away from Tiruvidaimarudur on the Kaveri lying between the great temple centres of Mayavaram and Kumbhakonam. It was built by the great Chola king Kulottunga I in the beginning of the 11th century and was, till Ayyar wrote his book in 1923 and, I believe, is even today, the only temple where the Sun-God receives regular worship in a shrine of His own as an independent and important deity. I am sorry I have not been able to get a description or to see a picture of the representation of the Sun-deity in this temple; but I presume that it is anthropomorphic.

As already mentioned Surya is a member of the deity-complex known as "Panchadeva" the pentad, which is kept in Brahmin and other households for daily worship. The Sun-God, however, does not appear to have had a "Panchaya-

tana" temple of his own, except the one at Osia near Jodhpur where with Him as the principal deity, the other four deities of the complex were placed either in independent shrines of their own grouped round His shrine or in the corners or walls of His temple.[24]

No new temple dedicated to the Sun-god appears to have been built after the 13th century. None of the old temples of this God in Northern, Eastern and Western India appear to be alive as a centre of religious practice.

The Sun-deity hardly needs a shrine and the folk-culture of India has been alive to that fact. It is not a very uncommon sight in the megalo-cultural and cosmopolitan commercial city of Bombay to see people like Waghris and Dheds washing their faces at the municipal water-taps early in the morning and throwing a little water in air in the open as for the Sun and going through the usual obeisance-gestures looking towards the east. And if the Brahmin males offer 'mantric' prayers to the rising and the setting sun, women of Brahmin and other high castes show their reverence to and their regard for the blessings of the Sun-god by going through more or less the same procedure as that mentioned above as being the practice of Waghris and such other castes in Bombay city. But they do so only after their bath and preferably while offering worship to the basil plant.

In an astrologically minded culture, astronomical phenomena are not likely to be missed, and the great significance for the spiritual good of both the living and the dead, of the apparent northern courses of the sun came to be recognised very early, being mentioned in one of the oldest *Upanishads*.[25] At the prospect of the recession of the cold season and the onset of warmth there is bound to be rejoicings which can take forms only appropriate to the central theme and tempo of the particular culture. In Indian culture with its accent on religiosity it has embodied itself in a rite prescribed in many of the regional almanacs to be observed on the 7th day of the bright half of the lunar month of Magha (January-February). It is called 'Rathasaptami', 'the chariot seventh' on account of the Sun-god being represented by a chariot which stands for its symbol, mythology describing him as journeying through space in a chariot drawn by seven horses.

The day is supposed to coincide with the beginning of the northern course of the sun.

The day is duly noted in the almanacs of Panjab, Jodhpur-Rajasthan, Mathura and Kasi and also of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhradesa, Tamilnad and Kerala. In the almanacs of the first three regions the rite prescribed is bath in the early hours before sun-rise. In the Kasi-Varanasi almanac it is further specified as the festival of the chariot of the sun and in the Andhra almanac the feast is called 'sun and moon vow.'

I am sorry I do not possess any information about the Panjab and Northern India if there is any folk observance other than the prescribed bath. In Bengal a festival known as 'chhat Puja', 'the 6th worship', is held on the bright 6th of Kartik "when people gather at a river or pool and offer libations to the setting sun, and repeat the ceremony on the following morning." In Mymansingh unmarried girls worship the sun in Magh hoping thereby to secure a good husband and a kind mother-in-law.[26] In Maharashtra married ladies in a household after bath draw a rough picture of a chariot on a plantain leaf in front of the basil plant, generally planted in front of the house. On an improvised hearth by its side they boil rice in milk so that in boiling it spills over. It is essential that the milk-rice should boil over to ensure plenty for the next year and or for the manes to receive their share of nourishing food (?)

In Karnataka the figure drawn is composed of two equilateral triangles placed one upon the other so as to form a six-pointed star with a six-sided figure formed in the middle. In the centre the mystic syllable "Om" is drawn. Sesamum and water are offered to the manes. According to P. V. Jagadisha Ayyar[27] the bath on this day must be taken over the leaves of 'arka' plant (*calatropis giganta*); and it should be borne in mind while evaluating the prescription that 'arka' in Samskrit also means the sun. The same writer assures us that the above-mentioned sun-symbol is placed on a chariot either pictured or one of solid metal, the whole being deposited in a small booth specially erected. The rice-milk boiling is done as in Maharashtra.

In Tamilnad where the calendar is solar the milk-rice

boiling is done by a married sister for her brother on the day of the winter solstice itself and is known as the festival of "Pongal". The chariot-seventh, which is observed by most people except perhaps Iyengars, assumes a public aspect. Not only children draw the sun-disc in small toycarts round their localities but there is also regular worship of the sun-representation in the local temples. Many of the temples then take out a car-procession with the sun-symbol in honour of the Sun-god.

The extent and strength of the cult of the Sun in the 7th century comes out into strong belief through a contemporary fair current in Gaya district. At a place called Dev, situated about 14 miles to the south-west of Pamanganj there is a big temple of Surya where it is believed the poet Mayura, Bana's brother-in-law, whose hymns to Surya I have already mentioned, performed penance. Annually on the 6th day of the lunar month Chaitra (April) a great fair is held there and is attended by hundreds of lepers from all over the country with the belief of getting cured of their disease.[28]

The Brahmin who offers his morning and evening prayer to the Sun-god is no longer the general rule; and some of the non-Brahmins, who contended for their right to initiation which ushers in the state after which such prayers can be offered, are not today so keen either about it or the Sun-prayer. The new Brahmin, of the scientific age, the scientist, though as an individual not only forgets the Sun-prayer but may not have said it even ten or twenty times, in association has deemed it necessary to adopt a motto which is a modification of and a brief excerpt from the standard Sun-prayer. The National Institute of Sciences of India at its silver jubilee celebrations blazoned forth its motto, which runs: "Havayami bhargah saviturvarenyam," "I invoke the splendid glory of Savitri, the Sun-god." All the words excepting the first verb are taken up from the famous 'Gayatri mantra' which with its mystic potency is one of the oldest prayers offered by Indians in ages gone by.

The scientists of India thus continue the thirty-five hundred-years-old spititual tradition of their culture to seek inspiration for their new endeavours in the space-age.

2

RUDRA-SIVA-PHALLUS: A SYNTHESIS

Siva is the second deity of the pentad worshipped today by Brahmins and similar castes and supposed to be the standard complex of deities of Hinduism. He and Vishnu, the third of the complex, with Surya make up the triad of deities hailing from the earliest times of Indo-Aryan culture though not necessarily under same appellations.

Siva, or Sankara as the *Bhagavadgita* (X, 23) has it, is after all the best among Rudras; and Rudra is a Rigvedic deity of no mean significance. Some of the exploits ascribed to Siva in later Brahmanic literature and some of his names are already met with in the early Vedic literature in the description of Rudra. So much so is Siva the same deity, only more elevated and eagerly sought for, as the Vedic Rudra that Siddheshwar Shastri Chitrav in his *Prachina Charitrakosa* (Dictionary of Ancient Biographies) describes the traits and doings of Siva under Rudra, leaving almost nothing to be listed under the heading Siva or Sankara. E. W. Hopkins following the Epic practice while describing the third of his triad of the Supreme Gods, begins to speak of Siva-worship and insensibly passes on to narrate the doings of Rudra as "Devadeva", "God of gods", and notes the festival called in the *Mahabharata* 'Pasupati-utsava', 'festival of Pasupati,' a form of Siva, which used to collect a large mass of worshippers together about the beginning of March. Of the festivals connected with the worship of the pentad, this is perhaps the one which has received the earliest notice in old literature.[1]

Theism proper, postulating one Supreme God to whom personal devotion is rendered as one's religion, was adumbrated in the *Svetasvatara Upanishad.* It centred round Rudra who is referred to as Isana, as Mahesvara and not only as 'Siva' meaning 'good' (IV, 16) but also named Hara (I, 10). Rudra

again is distinctly spoken of as having two aspects or bodies, one being terrific and the other beneficent (III, 5). And He is entreated to bring welfare to his worshipers, devotees or suppliants with his beneficent and mild but sin-destroying body. He is identified as the Omniscient, Omnipotent and Omnipresent Supreme Soul knowing whom one gets release from mundane existence. It is the appreciation of Rudra-Siva's terrific and evil aspect that makes the poet-philosopher address Him the standard Vedic prayer and entreaty (IV, 22), "May you not harm our progeny, our life, our cattle, our horses; and may you not kill our warriors; to that end we offer you oblations." The pacificatory and propitiatory aspects of Hindu prayers were present in combination in this Upanishadic theism centred round Rudra-Siva before the 7th century B.C.

The *Upanishad* which thus identifies Rudra with Siva and glorifies him into the Supreme Brahman in the terminology current for Supreme God and also enthrones Him as personal God is believed to be composed after the 7th century B.C. The development of theosophic thought recorded in it is the culmination of much other pondering and even fanciful imagining and analogical ascription which is met with in the Vedic literature later than the *Rigveda* and ending with the *Brahmanas* which can hardly be about two centuries older than the *Svetasvatara Upanishad.*

To make a brief resume of that development, I shall begin by stressing the fact that the prayer for freedom from evil addressed to Rudra-Siva noted above is a heritage of his malevolent nature which along with the specific prayer is expressed in the *Rigveda* itself.[3] His healing aspect and connection with herbs etc. are the Rigvedic counterpart of the expressly stated beneficent aspect in the Upanishadic description of the deity quoted above. So we find in the later Vedas that Rudra, just as Vishnu, is treated as the great god. These later Vedic texts while significantly identifying Rudra with Agni tend to enumerate seven and perhaps more often, eight forms.[4] Here we may see the germs of the later theory that Siva has eight forms which not only facilitated but also substantiated his identification with the Supreme and the ascription of omnipresence to him. Among the seven or more forms

mentioned in the *Yajurveda*, two, Bhava and Sarva, which like Mahadeva and Pasupati are among the later names of Siva, deserve a special notice. The *Satapatha Brahmana*, hardly two centuries before the *Svetasvatara Upanishad*, vouchsafes us the important information that Agni was called Bhava among the Bahikas, and Sarva among the eastern people.[5]

Not far later than the *Svetasvatara Upanishad*, perhaps in the 6th or the 5th century B.C. in the *Baudhayanagrihya-sutra*[6] we see a family grown round Rudra. In the rite, prescribed to be observed on the 8th of a lunar month, which is a half-fast requiring worship to be offered in the evening by the fasting worshipper, Rudra is invoked as Virupaksha along with his wife, his son, his group-followers and his constituent servants. This famous epithet of Rudra-Siva, Virupaksha, is given to him because he has the third or awkward eye placed in the forehead and is endowed with fiery-lustre that can burn up things on which it falls. In the later mythology woven round Siva, two, among his epithets, this Virupaksha and the older Tryambaka, are taken to commemorate his three-eyed aspect.

That Rudra-Siva was still looked upon largely in his malevolent aspect is clear from two or three other rites of pacification or conciliation.[7] The Agnimukha rite, a part of the complex of marriage ritual, ends with an oblation to Virupaksha who is described as 'nijangha' (without thighs ?) and 'sabolodara' 'dark-bellied' and is implored not to harass the worshipper and is asked to cease troubling in order that the worshipper may prosper unhindered. The other occasion, known as the 'sulagava' rite, is prescribed in many of the Grihyasutras. As its name implies, it involved the offering of rod-roasted beef and rice. It was to be done outside the village. The invocation-offering formula mentions, 'Bhava deva', 'Sarva deva', 'Isana deva', 'Pasupati deva', 'Rudra deva', 'Ugra deva', 'Bhima deva' and 'Mahat deva' as the recipients; and also the wife of every one separately. Another item in the same rite is the offering of oblation, 'baliharana'. The deities entitled to receive are a much wider circle and include not only Vishnu and even Hari, but many natural objects, abstract entities and material objects. But our interest is

centred in the mention of not only Rudra who figures among them as Isana, 'ganas' and 'parishads', who are the followers and servants of Rudra, and even 'Ambika' without specification of her connection with any male deity, but also 'Rudra, Rudrani' and 'Rishabha' separately as denizens of 'devata-avakasa', 'deity space', i.e. the part of the house reserved for images and idols for daily worship. 'Rudra' again, and 'Pasupati' for the first time along with 'pasus' or beasts, i.e. cattle, receive the oblation in the stables, emphasizing Rudra's aspect as 'Pasupati', 'lord of beasts.' It is by this name 'Pasupati' that one of the most important of Saiva sects the 'Pasupatas' is known, because the followers worship Siva in this aspect.

In the above list of deities who are the recipients of oblations we have 'Ganapatis' or lords of Siva's troupes in the plural. This fact clearly indicates that till then, i.e. the 5th or the 6th century B.C. Ganapati in the singular standing for one specific deity was not recognized. In view of this the last injunction ending this chapter on "Offering of Oblations" deserves particular attention. It runs: "I bow to Rudra; oblation to Bhauma". Bhauma is one of the epithets of the elephant-headed god, Ganapati.

This context enhances the significance of the inclusion of Siva not only as Virupaksha but also as Mahadeva among the malevolent deities that are enjoined to be mollified with offerings in the slightly later, *Manavagrihyasutra*.[8]

This implication of the malevolent aspect was evidently almost the last appenage of Siva's Rudrahood. It is more or less clear from even the meagre facts that can be gathered incidentally from scientific and meticulous authors like Panini and Patanjali, the great grammarians, and from the mythological lore of the epics that Siva had definitely been enthroned as a Supreme God. His favour was to be sought through devotional worship as that of a merciful and benevolent deity. And He was ceremonially implanted in shrines, if He was not already thought capable of arising in situ without His image being fashioned and placed in the shrine by men.

I have already referred to Hopkins' view that Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesa or Siva were already the three Supreme Gods of the epic pantheon. The *Ramayana*, the slightly later of the two epics in form but in contents the older, which is

based on the culture of the east and the south as the *Mahabharata* is on that of the west and to some extent the north, contains in its earlier and the authentic part the interesting information that among the fourteen or fifteen shrines which graced the hermitage of the sage Agastya in the south not only were two consecrated to Siva but also that they were dedicated to him as 'Bhava' and 'Agni'.[9] The two significant facts are that Siva's Vedic identification with Agni was still in evidence in the south and that all the shrines were still called simply 'sthanas' or places and not as 'devayatana' or 'devalaya', 'abode of God.' I may add further that even Siva's son Skanda had a shrine dedicated to him in the hermitage of Agastya. And this reference to Skanda or Kartikeya in the south, where later he was to be, and to continue to remain in the extreme south to this day, a favourite deity, is the earliest.

Among the many tales which the sage Visvamitra told Rama when the latter accompanied him before his marriage to eradicate the demons is one concerning a famous ancestor of Rama, Bhagiratha and his great deeds ending in the bringing down of the Ganga river and conducting it to the sea. This famous episode is significantly known as Gangavatarana,[10] the descent of the Ganges or Ganga river. The problem of problems was how to channel the pouring torrents of the heavenly river in its course on the earth without eroding it. The great king on being advised to seek the help of Siva, who alone was equal to the task, sought it with great devotion and fervour. Siva ever ready to help and bless his sincere and loving devotees, a trait of his character which is stressed in many an episode, agreed to undertake the task. In the actual description of the descent given in the text[11] the following epithets redolent of later Siva-lore are used: 'Umapati', the husband of Uma; 'Sulia', the holder of the 'sula' trident; 'Pasupati', the lord of beasts; 'Siva', the auspicious one; 'Samkara', the beneficent one; 'Hara'; 'Rudra'; and 'Trinayana', the three-eyed one.

Visvamitra in his journey with Rama proceeding on his way came to the city Visala on the northern bank of the Ganga and answering Rama's curiosity about the royal house of the city and its region narrated the tale of the churning

of the ocean which was done at that place ages ago by the gods and the demons. The rope with which the churn was being rotated having been provided by the great cosmic serpent Vasuki itself in person, after the operation had proceeded for a fairly long time deadly and burning poison poured out of its mouth. And it began to burn things. This frightened the participants and particularly the gods who are the first custodians of the world. As very frequent in Hindu mythology, the gods including in this case Vishnu, resorted to Siva, who is referred to here by the epithets natural and necessary for the occasion. He is called Mahadeva and Devesa and is also referred to as Rudra, Hara, Pasupati and Suladhara.[12]

Another exploit of Siva, on which a festival was based and is observed even today as part of the Holi festival, is 'Kamadahana' or the burning of the God of Love. The *Ramayana* describes it in a very significant context leading to the narration of the birth of Skanda or to 'Kumarasambhava' as it is called in Samskrit and is as such immortalized by Kalidasa. In this context he is not only called by his old designation of Rudra and the newer flattering epithets of Devesa and Devadeva but what is even more significant, also by the unique appellation of 'Sthanu', 'one who stays unmoved and permanent'. In the *Mahabharata,* too, in the Kirata-Arjuna episode, Siva or Mahadeva is referred to as Bhagawan Sthanu.[13]

After Rama won Sita by breaking the mighty bow of Siva deposited by Parasurama with the kingly house of Janaka, Parasurama, pricked by the insult to his preceptor, according to the relevant mythology, implied in Rama's exploit, confronted Rama. In the challenge that Parasurama threw he informed him that the bow that he had broken was specially prepared by the gods for 'Tryambaka' Siva, the smiter of the owner of the three miraculous cities, 'Tripura'. He further vouchsafed a curious piece of ancient mythology or a legend newly coined for the glorification of Vishnu by sectarian Vaishnavas, that after Siva's triumph over Tripura, gods made Siva and Vishnu fight each other for the determination of supremacy. In the contest that took place Vishnu with his mighty bow came out victorious and the gods decided that Vishnu and his bow were mightier than Siva and his bow.

Admonishing Rama in this manner, Parasurama challenged him to wield that Vaishnava bow which Parasurama used to carry.[14] It is thus indirectly and rather in a belittling manner that the very great exploit of Siva which to this day is remembered and celebrated is mentioned in this epic of Rama, the 7th incarnation of Vishnu.

It is well known that at the famous shrine of Vishnu at Tirupati in Andhradesa, where a university has now come into existence, a great feast and festival of lights is observed on the 15th of the bright half of the lunar month of Kartik. This day is recorded in the standard almanacs of Gujarat and Maharashtra as the 'Tripura'-fifteenth, and in those of Varanasi and Jodhpur as Tripura-festival. In the Panjab almanac it is called 'Tukari' fifteenth.* While the Maharashtrian almanac mentions it as a festival of light of Tiruvannamalai, the Gujarati one specifies it as Devdiwali, i.e. as the festival of lights of the gods. This specification is reserved in the Marathi calendar for the 1st day of the bright half of the lunar month of Margasirsha. In the Telugu calendar Kritthika deepotsavam i.e. Kritthika or Kartik lights-festival is noted against the day; the Malayalam one for Kerala simply speaks of lights without the festival-qualification. The Tamil almanac is more explicit stating that lights are to be lighted in all temples, with the next day reserved for lights in Vishnu temples.

The narration of the episode of the burning of the God of Love introduces the account of Siva's having resorted to severe and long continued austerities. For it was to make Siva give them up and marry a proper bride that the God of love or Kama as commissioned by the gods wanted to strike Siva with his arrows and enkindle sexual passion in him. The place where Siva was practising penance and later Kama was burnt by him for his impudence became a great hermitage peopled by the disciples of Siva who had gathered round him while he was engaged as an ascetic in austerities and 'yoga'. It was on one occasion of Siva's emerging from his

*In South Konkan (Talukas Malwan, Vengurla and Sawantwadi) this day is known as 'Tiparachi purnima'. The transformation of Tripura to the dialectical 'Tipar has prompted me to consider this Panjabi 'Tukari' as another dialectical form of Tripura.

'samadhi', complete meditation, that Kama had tried his tricks. Those pupils of Siva had become famous and adept ascetics by the time Rama was there in the company of Visvamitra.[15] And in this description lies the origin of the later representations, highly artistic and greatly ennobling ones, of Siva as 'Dakshinamurti' or as 'Desika', preceptor. The mastery of 'Yoga' which is early predicated of Siva may be considered to be the contribution of the pre-Aryan civilization to the Aryan culture, only in so far as its ascription to this deity in preference to others was made early. In the *Svetasvara Upanishad*[16] there is mention of the 'siddhi' or miraculous powers or states which an adept in Yoga attains when he is able to concentrate in the final stage of the Yogic technique. Immediately after the mention of these the next section opens with the 'ruling powers', 'isanis' of Rudra who is then lauded as the Supreme God. Among the remains of the Indus valley civilization there are representations, which undoubtedly are evidence of the actual existence of beings sitting in Yogic postures of trance. And the horn-bearing majestic human being in Yogic posture answers to the description of Rudra as 'Pasupati', 'lord of beasts'. Elsewhere I have shown[17] that it is neither necessary not reasonable to look upon the whole Yogic technique as a contribution of that civilization.

The most vexatious and discussed feature, however, of Hindu religion and of the Saiva cult is the later phallic representation and the orgiastic sex of the earlier complex and of the later sects. It is concretised not only mildly as in the worship-image of Siva being a 'Yoni-Linga', i.e. male erect organ standing in the middle of the outer region of the female sex-organ, but also very loudly and blatantly in sexual scenes of varied sorts pornographically and sacrilegiously carved on some of the medieval Siva temples.

Abnormality of sexual activity is positively predicated of Siva in the tale of the birth of the extraordinary martial deity Skanda or Kartikeya as detailed in the *Ramayana*.[18] Siva is said to have engaged himself in sexual congress with Uma, who is called 'Bhagavati Devi', for over a hundred divine years without any result. And the gods had to induce him to drop his semen by some special pleading and that too outside Uma's vagina. In some sections of the *Mahabharata*[19], con-

sidered to be rather late, there are references to the special nature of Siva's sex-organ, that it always stood erect and would not drop his semen but hold it up inside and also that he is the only god whose sex-organ is worshipped by gods.

Writing half a century ago R. G. Bhandarkar was disposed not to ignore some passages of the *Svetasvatara Upanishad*[20] as evidence of the phallic aspect of Rudra very early in the development of the deity Rudra-Siva.

In the early Vedic literature among the despised peoples whom the Vedic Aryans encountered in India occur groups which had phallic deities. In the long process of amalgamation the pre-Aryan and newly developing Indo-Aryan concepts of magic powers and the significance of the phallus as the generative power came to receive slowly but surely their share of attention. The red-coloured god of violent commotion who was at the same time a healer, i.e. a regenerator, proved more suitable for the ascription of and identification with this aspect. But the actuality of the phallus getting installed for worship, apart from having a tender corner in the hearts of people, is attested about two centuries after Christ.*

For the period with which we are at present concerned, even Siva as such without his phallic emblem had not achieved supremacy in the actual practices of the people, the supreme position which the expression used about him in the *Ramayana* and the earlier sections of the *Mahabharata* would suggest.

We know from Panini[21] who lived before 300 B.C. and his great commentator Patanjali whose time is known to be the middle of the second century B.C. that images—mark they were images, and no phallus for Siva—of Siva, Skanda and Visakha were already worshipped in temples and open places and that priests specializing in the worship of these deities derived their livelihood from their technical services and possession of the images of these deities. Between the time of Panini and that of Patanjali kings of the Maurya dynasty, which began with Chandragupta, whose grandson, the great emperor Asoka was a Buddhist, manufactured in their State factories metal images of these deities and offered

* I leave out the so-called Linga from Bhita in the Lucknow museum as too controversial.

them in the open market for sale. Such images Patanjali informs us could not be given the dignified appellation of deities which images in worship received.

In the *Bhagavadgita*[22] Lord Krishna identifying himself with every best or excellent object of its class tells his disciple Arjuna that he is Samkara among the Rudras. It is clear that to Krishna and Arjuna and to the people contemporary with the composition of the *Bhagavadgita* Samkara was still only one of the eleven Rudras and not a god of gods or a Supreme Deity. It is worthy of note that even Jnanesvara, the great commentator of the book who lived in the last quarter of the thirteenth century does not gloss over the reference to the non-supreme nature of Samkara though he gives one of his most favourite epithets, the destroyer of 'Madana', 'god of love'. This is the more significant because Jnanesvara belonged to the Natha sect, the philosophy of which is traditionally believed to have been formulated by Samkara. And it is so specifically stated by Jnanesvara himself[23] who refers to Samkara as the foe of Tripura, thus referring to Siva's particularly great triumph.

The status of Siva, at least among the people to the east of Allahabad (Prayag), about a century or two before Christ and for about an equal period after him best comes out in the description of what Rama's mother Kausalya, whose family, as her ethnic name suggests, must have come from the region lying to the north and north-east of Varnasi (Kasi), did and said when Rama was about to leave for his banishment to the forest. "May, o Raghava-lion, the Dharma (Righteous Behaviour) which you have practised and are now practising protect you. Dear son, may the gods whom you bow down to in the temples, along with the great sages ward you in the forest. May all the great beasts, mountains and trees save you. May all the gods like Vidhata, Pushan, Bhaga, Aryaman, Maruts, Indra and others bring good to you. May the god Bhagawan Skanda, may Soma and Brihaspati, may Narada and the seven great sages guard you ..... May Brahma, *the lord of all worlds*,.....protect you." As a further part of the auspicious rites Kausalya got a high-souled Brahmin to offer oblations, having herself brought all the

* Italics mine.

necessary material for such rites. She had the 'santi', 'peace', formulas chanted by the Brahmin and then having kissed (smelled) him on the crown of the head pronounced the following benediction: "O Raghava, may all the groups of gods like Siva and others worshipped by me, may all the great sages, all the beings, all the gods and serpents, wish and bestow on you welfare while you are on your way to and in the forest."[24]

It should be noted that Siva figured as one among the many gods and that though his son Skanda receives the high qualification 'Bhagavan', Siva does not.

The kind of invocations recorded enshrine the popular Hindu attitude towards Godhead current even among the elite not only in the distant past about 1800 years ago but even much later. It is not quite obsolete even now when the supremacy of the gods Vishnu and Siva is ideologically established among the elite and the middle cultural milieus.

It is entirely in keeping with this attitude to Siva that we find that even in the *Mahabharata*[25] in its earlier section in a context where one expects highest eulogy of the god we get a rather tame prayer. The occasion is the episode, famous because it tested and established the bravery and skill in archery of Arjuna, the chief warrior among the Pandava brothers, known as 'Kirataparvan' or simply 'Kiratarjuniyam'. Arjuna fighting with Siva, who had come in the guise of a Kirata, to contest his unlawful claim for the game chased by them both, found his skill baulked and stalked. He realised that the Kirata was Siva himself and prayed for forgiveness in three or four verses or six or eight lines in terms which strike one as lukewarm and mild in comparison with the effusion Arjuna poured on Lord Krishna in the *Bhagavadgita*.

This refusal of supreme position to Siva was felt by the followers of Siva-cult, as is evident from an addition very awkwardly made in the second part of the *Ramayana*, the text of which is generally accepted as that of a later author. Rama in his return journey from Lanka by air describes to Sita various memorable places and events. One of them is the building of the bridge, 'setu', at the south point of India enabling him and his associates to cross over the sea to Lanka. He informs her that it was the boon conferred by Mahadeva

whose image he had first set up at the place and prayed to. In the early part where the great obstacle of the sea and the deliberations of Rama and his associates and their final resolve and achievement are described there is no mention of any prayer, much less to Siva, and still less is there any reference to the setting up of any image.[26] Today of course there stands the famous magnificent temple of Ramesvara or Setubandha Ramesvara as it is popularly and significantly called. The deity is Siva-Linga and is Ramesvara because it is believed that it was set up by Rama. Ayyar[27] has referred to a later Puranic account of setting up of the Linga by Rama and has also figured the beautiful images of Rama, Lakshmana and Sita set up in the temple. With these images, though there are eleven Lingas there, one can truly describe the temple as Siva-Rama temple. But then the point of significance in naming it Ramesvara, or Ramnath as is sometimes done, will be entirely lost.

3

PHALLUS ANTHROPOMORPHIZED AND SUBLIMATED

Representational images of both Siva and Skanda were made from before 300 B.C. but their actual anthropomorphic images are available to us only from about the first century before Christ when they began to appear on some local coins of Ujjain. This representation in bulk was used by some of the foreign rulers of India, the Indo-Parthians, the Kushans and the Kshatrapas.[1]

Images of Siva emphasizing and exposing his sex-organ either by themselves or carved on 'Linga'-like pillars would have demonstrated the actuality of the process of assimilation of the two trends in the Siva-cult. But if there are such figures they are late, dating from after the 6th century A.D.

In this connection I should like to refer to the famous Gudimallam 'Linga' which has been frequently acclaimed as the earliest phallic symbol of Siva. If the ascription of this composite anthropo-ithyphallic deity in current worship at Gudimallam[2] near Ranigunta to the 1st or 2nd century B.C. could be correct, students of Indian culture in general and of the sociology of religion in particular would place the exaggeration of the sexual aspect of Siva and the assimilation of the pre-Aryan phallic worship with the Aryan Siva emphasized in his over-sexed aspect in South India. And this at the stage in her socio-cultural history when the ideas of Asoka, conveyed to the people of the South in his stone edicts not even hundred years earlier, were bearing fruit in the form of the Stupas of Jaggayyapeta and Amaravati which enshrined various quietistic and anti-passion scenes from Buddha's life.

I think that on sylistic grounds alone, apart from this problem presented by the known cultural history, the Gudimallam 'Linga' will have to be dated late, as many scholars think. The well-shaped torso, with the waist finely marked in a curve as a piece of sculpture appears stylistically later

than the Amaravati figures, whose torsos from the shoulders to the hips present almost the shape of a rectangle. The Siva figure on the Gudimallam Linga is distinctly broader at the shoulders than at the hips and what is more has a supple abdomen giving rise in the particular pose to two well-marked lateral folds, a feature attesting later sculptural art. Under these circumstances the specimen of the composite anthropo-phallic image of Gudimallam cannot be considered to be the earliest known representational symbol of Siva-cult.

The earliest known specimens of the early form of the phallic Siva worship are pure male phalluses very realistic in execution. The Lucknow and Mathura specimens both from Mathura region are the ones that attract our attention being the earliest ones.[3] Both belong to the Kushan period and have the nut well-marked. One of them is very big measuring in height about 200 cm.

Soon after, phallus must have come to be recognized as the standard symbol of Saiva sect. We find the dynasty of the Bharasivas, who were Brahmins by caste and Naga in ethnic stock, with their capital at Kantipura near Mirzapur in U.P. from about 185 A.D. to about 300 A.D., and were Sivas or followers of the Saiva cult, described as "pleasing Siva by carrying Siva Linga on their shoulders."[4] Ray Krishnadas thinks that the fine Linga at Bhumara in Nagod District which is what is known as 'Ekamukahalinga' i.e. Linga with one anthropomorphic face of Siva carved on it, is their legacy. Banerjea, however, is not disposed to assign any 'mukhalinga' to a date prior to the early Gupta period.[5]

This sculpturing of the face of Siva over the front face of the phallus is the second step in the process of obliterating the sexual appeal of the phallic symbol and conventionalising it as a representation of God Siva. The assimilational technique must have begun by removing the nut-marking at the top, the addition of the face—later two, three, four or five faces in all came to be figured—facilitating the worshippers' contemplation on the powerful and beneficent deeds of the mythological Siva.

The Bharasiva power passed on to the Vakatakas, who carried on their mission from the region known as Bundelkhand. They too were Saivas and would appear to have been

the first to adopt Bhairava as the patron deity. The magnificent Linga at Khoh, about five miles south of Bhumara, which has a single face carved on it and the four-faced one at Nachna, about fourteen miles from Bhumara are their legacy.[6] The Vakatakas were the earliest of Indian kings who prided themselves on being 'Atyanta-mahesvaras' or 'Parama-mahesvaras', i.e. extreme or most confirmed devotees of Mahesvara. Some of the scions are so described in a copper-plate inscription of Chammak in Elichpur District of Berar ascribed to the fifth century A.D.[7]

The aspects presented by the face on these Lingas is so soul-lifting that one completely forgets the phallic background. In this quality of soul-lifting, I think the Khoh Linga beats all, and compares not at all unfavourably even with the greatest masterpieces of Siva images like the majestic Trimurti of Gharapuri (Elephanta) in Bombay harbour or the blissful Nataraja of the 21st cave at Verula (Ellora) in Aurangabad District, and to me at least appeals more than the three-faced Mahesa of Lankesvara or single-faced Siva Mahayogi of Kailasa at the same place.

The 'Faced-Linga', 'Mukhalinga', as the Saiva image of worship, is favoured by one sect of the Saiva creed which is known as the Pasupata sect,[8] because its scriptures enjoin that the followers must worship Siva besmeared with ashes and wearing 'jatamukuta', crown of matted hair.[9]

This refinement in the Saiva object of worship was brought out in all likelihood by one Lakulisa, who must have lived according D. R. Bhandarkar, about 200 A.D. He is represented in the *Puranas* as the 28th incarnation of Siva. Some centuries before him lived Srikantha. He was perhaps a contemporary of the grammarian Patanjali. He must have started the engrafting of phallic aspect on Rudra-Siva.[10]

Before Patanjali's time and even perhaps before 300 B.C., the great deeds of Vasudeva Krishna and his protege, the Pandava Arjuna, had resulted in the formulation of a Vaishnava pantheon and a Vaishnava form of worship. Whatever the complete list of items that composed the total complex called worship, it is clear from archaeological and epigraphic remains that the setting up of a high pillar with the image of the specific mount of Vishnu, eagle, set on it was the most

notable. A Greek, by name Heliodorus, who hailed from Taxila in the north-west, erected a column of the type mentioned above and appropriately called it 'Garudadhwaja', 'eagle-banner' at Besnagar in the 2nd century B.C.[11]

The progress of Vaishnavism under Vasudeva worship impinging on the public mind with its fine advertisement in the shape of Garudadhwajas could not fail to be a challenge to the believers in the supermacy of Siva as the godhead. This story of the rivalry between the two principal, in the final analysis, the only operative, systems of faith and worship among the elite and middle cultural levels, has gone on for over 2000 years and has not always been a healthy one.[12] To me, it appears that some of the lower features of pseudo-religious practices in both the systems tarnishing their sacred aspect that have cropped up from time to time are the consequence of the spirit of rivalry seeking newer techniques of popular appeal.

The prophetic tales retailed in the *Vayu purana,* of the 3rd century A.D., and the later *Linga purana* and briefly mentioned by R. G. Bhandarkar corroborate my contention that some fresh assimilatory process was employed by a Saiva 'acharya' or devotee to compete with the growing prestige of Vaishnavism. It is stated that when Vasudeva will be born as the son of Vasudeva, Mahesvara or Siva would incarnate himself as a Brahmacharin, celibate, by the name of Lakulin, who with four pupils will be the great Pasupatas—followers of the Pasupata sect. This Puranic story is stated in the form of an actual fact in an inscription of the end of the 10th century A.D. inscribed in a temple near Udaipur.

Both Srikantha and Lakulin along with three other Saiva devotees, form a pentad of deities in the Saiva pantheon, particularly of Northern Saivism. Srikantha's caste and provenance are not known but Lakulin was a Brahmin born at Karvana in Dabhoi Taluka of Gujarat.[14]

The Mathura pillar, the inscription on which enabled D. R Bhandarkar to determine the date of Lakulin, as it is dated 380 A.D., is reasonably believed to have borne the representations of two Saiva teachers carrying each a 'linga', 'phallus', on his head.[15] This is an important relic of authoritative confirmation of my contention that Lakulin must have

introduced refinements in the phallic worship of Siva in response to the challenge of Vaishnavism for popularity.

It was only a few years earlier than the raising of the above representation, or as I should like to name it the 'Rupalinga', at Mathura that Harishena the panegyrist of the great Gupta emperor Samudragupta ended his grand declaration with the impramature of his monarch's fame using the imagery of the anthropomorphic Siva of Puranic mythology. It runs: "The fame of the monarch rising higher and higher through valour, knowledge, self-control and gifts purifies the three worlds as does the water of Ganga (Ganges) which is white and rapidly flowing owing to its being held up in and then let out of his matted hair by Pasupati."[16] The idea of camouflaging the phallic aspect and emphasizing the anthropomorphic, evoking reverential emotion in and giving soul-lifting experience to the worshippers of the deity, caught on so emphatically that sometime later the phallic symbols in household worship came to have face-masks of Siva put on them. The clearest evidence of this practice is recorded by Bana, who was a protege of the great emperor Harshavardhan of Kanauj and lived about the middle of the 7th century A.D. In the biography of his patron written in Samskrit, Bana informs us that his patron's father was a Siva-worshipper, and got progeny by the favour of Siva secured through the services of a Saiva 'siddha' or an ascetic adept in Saiva miracle-working technique. Bhairavacharya,[17] as he was called, was a southerner who belonged to the school of Saivism which among its lay followers and even ascetic ones tended to engender excesses like those which a Pallava king of Kanchi (Conjeevaram) of the south ridiculed in a Samskrit farce written about the time and significantly named *Mattavilasaprahasana,* 'farce of the pranks of an intoxicated person'.

Vasudevasaran Agrawal[18] commenting on the passage from *Harshacharita* where the masks are referred to observes: "Mathura art produced four-faced, five-faced and single-faced 'Linga'. In Gupta age only single-faced 'Linga' began to be set up." The phallic symbol of the violent deity Rudra-Siva, while thus placating the local people, was adapted to satisfy the moral-aesthetic tastes of the classical Indo-Aryans. This innovation hit its target and achieved its end. We find that

at least two Godheads though worshipped and prayed to for ages receded into the background. And the one competing Godhead Vishnu, whose enthusiastic followers with their propagandistic technique of showing reverence had probably set the Saivas on their path of assimilation and refinement of the symbol of Godhead, though revered by some of the most powerful of the Gupta emperors, who either described themselves or were described by their descendants and panegyrists as 'mahabhagavatas,' 'great Bhagavatas' or 'Vaishnavites,' did not make much headway with the people at large[19]

Prestige of Saivism is best seen in the faiths subscribed to and patron-deities adopted by the reigning families contemporary with and immediately subsequent to the Imperial Guptas. Indian history shows that almost all the well-known dynasties from the 4th century A D. to about the end of the 10th century A.D. almost all over India excepting Rajasthan and part of the western U.P. and Saurashtra were Saivas. Vakatakas, who succeeded the Bharasivas in Central India and expanded their dominion in the south so as to include Vidarbha (Berar) were Siva worshippers. They were so devoted to their deity that at least one of them Pravarasena II, the grandson of the founder Pravarasena I had Bhairava, the terrific form of Siva as his patron deity.[20] He is described as 'maha-Bhairava bhakta,' 'devotee of maha-Bhairava.' The Hunas, who for a time after the eclipse of the Guptas ruled over a large part of northern India, though they subscribed to sun-worship, appear to have been staunch Saivas. At least the greatest among them, Mihirakula is described as an "assiduous worshipper of Pasupati (Siva)" in an inscription from Gwalior dated about 515-35 A.D.[21]

That Pushpabhuti of Thanesvar was a Saiva we have already known from Bana's description. Bana has also vouchsafed the additional important information that the subjects of Pushpabhuti were also Saiva. One of them, Vishnuvardhana alias Yasodharman, who was instrumental in finally disposing off the foreign Hunas, in his inscription of 532 A.D. referred to Mihirakula as one who had not bowed down to anyone but Sthanu, an epithet of Siva,[22] used as we shall see by Kalidasa, perhaps a century earlier.

After the downfall of the Vardhanas most of the reigning

families from Eastern Panjab to Orissa leaving Saurashtra in northern India were Saivas. As V. S. Pathak observes: "During early mediaevel period Saivism was very popular in Northern India. Majority of Gahadavala, Chedi, Chandella and Orissa kings were styled as *Parama-Mahesvara* ..... Several rulers dedicated their kingdoms, either to Siva or to Saiva ascetics."[23]

The Ikshvakus who came to power in Guntur district about the 3rd century A.D. described themselves as under the special favour of Mahasena (Skanda).[24] Of the Pallavas, more or less succeeding the Ikshvakus, two at least, beginning with Skandavarman from about the 4th century onwards, were under the special protection of Mahasena or Skanda and used the Saiva symbol of couchant bull on their coins.[25] The Kadambas of Banavasi, who began by being the commander of the Pallava armies, described their founder as being placed in that position by Shadanana, the six-faced god Skanda Mahasena and the 'Matris,' 'mothers'. They invoked Siva.[26] The great Chalukyas of Badami who followed the Kadambas similarly adopted Skanda as their patron deity. Their equally great successors the creators of that wonder at Verula (Ellora) known as Kailasa out of a mountain, too, were Siva worshippers. This is significant evidence of the prestige of Siva worship because both the Chalukyas and the Rashtrakutas used a title in their official description which harped on their kings having been the incarnations of Vishnu.[27]

The early Chalukyas, the Rashtrakutas and the Pallavas excavated or erected great and splendid temples most of which were dedicated to Siva worship, some to Devi worship and only rare ones to Vishnu worship. That does not mean that they had forgotten altogether the thrilling exploits, the ennobling incidents and the soul-lifting situations immortalized in Hindu mythology centred round Vishnu or by the poets and other intellectuals. But of this later. Here the point to be noted is the propagation of Siva-worship through the more manifest appeal of the magnificent structures dedicated to the worship of that deity. One of them being called Kailasa, the heaven in which Siva dwells, tantalizingly offered to the worshippers of Siva their religious hearts' desire of being in the presence of Siva in His very abode in the devotee's

mundane existence.

The earliest temples preserved to some extent or discovered by digging experts in northern India may be said to be the Gupta creations—erected in the later history of the imperial dynasty. They are situated in Ajaygadh and Nagod districts. Three of them, the most known and studied, were dedicated to three deities who form components of the current pentad of worship. They are the Siva temple at Bhumara, with another at Nachna and still another at Khoh but perhaps a little later in date than that of Bhumara, the Vishnu temple at Deogadh and the Devi temple at Nachna Kuthara. They are ascribed to a date soon after 500 A.D. These neither exhaust the list of temples erected or in existence at about 500 A.D. nor can they be taken to represent a proportionate share of the total number of deities in worship. We know that Skanda temples were erected[28] and Kalidasa refers to one in current use at a place near Ujjain,[29] the great Saiva centre of that age and of even much later age. Kalidasa[30] has spoken with great reverence of the famous Siva temple at Ujjain, then and ever since known as that of Mahakala. The fact that Saiva cult caught on among the elite is demonstrated by the invocations of the dramatists and poets from Kalidasa in the 4th century to Bhavabhuti in the 8th.

4

SIVA, THE NATARAJA AND THE IDEAL FAMILY-MAN

The ideal type of deity presented to the people by their elite, whether intellectual, regal or wealthy, is the one that matters for their morals and conduct in day to day affairs of living. The aspects presented in their invocations and exhortations invite our attention and I shall begin with those stressed in the inscriptions of the kings.

Santivarman, one of the Kadamba kings, about 455-70 A.D. invoked Siva, after a bow, as: "Victorious stands Sathanu, the Eternal, whose image is the collection of all the manifold gods and whose head is adorned with the large bundle of matted hair brightened by the shine of the moon (held in it)."[1] While this came from Talgunda, Shimoga District of Karnataka, the following was recorded by Yasodharman at Mandasor in Gwalior District in 532 A.D.: "Pinaki (Siva), the lord of the worlds, the splendour of whose teeth in the acts of smiling and of singing conceals and lightens the world as do the flashes of lightning at night triumphs. May Sambhu (Siva), who himself being the creator, supporter and destroyer in one of all beings, employed Svayambhu (Brahma) in the task of creating the worlds and bestowed on Him his greatness, direct many blessings on you (citizens). May the serpent of Bhava (Siva), the multitude of whose heads much depressed by the burden of the great load of head-jewels conceals the suplendour of the moon and who binds on His head the garland of holed bones, dispel your troubles."

Kalidasa, as is expected of a great poet and an intellectual, who was also a Saiva, as his name and his very endearing and reverential references to Siva show, is both more forthright and more eloquent. He begins his great semi-epic poetic work *Raghuvamsa*, a poet's account of the great family of Ikshvakus of Ayodhya beginning with Raghu's father, with

a simple but very appealing reference to Siva and his consort as: "I bow down to Parvati and Paramesvara, the parents of the universe, who are as united as word and its meaning, that I may acquire meaningful words." The appeal here is directly to the loving householder who, with his wife, is the Supreme Couple united in soul and body. The invocation further suggests Siva's connection with expository or literary mastery.

The invocation, or the auspicious beginning as it is called in dramatic technical literature, of a play though not entirely unfettered is even more significant. The invocation of a Samskrit drama is intended to suggest something about the plot or its incidents. In so far it is not entirely unfettered. But it is addressed to one's patron deity or 'ishtadevata', deity of one's choice, as opposed to family deity or village and place deity. Further it is to be addressed to the audience. The images of deities that these invocations convey are likely to evoke emotional responses from the elite and intermediate culture levels of the society, these being the main audience for the performances. In his three great dramas Kalidasa has stressed most of the peculiar characteristics and attributes of Siva and has created the image of a Supreme Deity of unique nature.

"May the Lord, who though supremely bountiful to His suppliants is Himself clad only in a raw hide, who though always in embrace with His beloved surpasses all ascetics in the control of sex, who though assuming eight forms to uphold the whole world, is above pride, dispel your dark tendencies and lead you to a vision of the right path." "May Sthanu (the Eternal One), who is easy of access to steady and concentrated devotion, who is declared in the *Upanishads* to be the Purusha trascending heaven and earth, who is the only Isvara (Supreme Lord) exclusively so called and who is sought after by all seekers of salvation through control of breath and other Yogic techniques, grant you highest bliss." "May Isa, who has eight manifest forms, viz. (1) water, the first creation of Brahma, (2) fire, carrier of properly made oblations, (3) sacrificer, (4 and 5) sun and moon, the creators of day and night, (6) ether or space, the omnipresent source of hearing, (7) earth, the source of all seed, and (8) wind or breath, the animator of all living things, protect you with all of them."[2]

In these invocations Kalidasa presented Siva as his cosmic and supercosmic deity, the Supreme God with personal attributes, and the Transcendental Principle. As the Supreme personal God Siva has his consort Parvati and takes on the unique aspect of a half-male half-female deity. He is yet a master of Yogic control and very bountiful to his devotees who can approach him through personal devotion. All the natural agencies that form and energize the universe are his forms. He is Isvara, Lord, *par excellence*. All the same he transcends the universe and therefore is the same as the transcendental Brahma of the Vedantins.

The next play in chronological order is *Mrichchakatika*, 'Toy Cart', of Sudraka. In popularity it has held its ground for over 1400 years, though now in vernacular garb. It is quite clearly the drama of the populace as well as of the elite, being concerned with some distant political revolt and with 'contemporary' life of the wealthy and the hangers on in the great city of Ujjain. And Ujjain from about the 4th or 5th century A.D. onwards was the hub of Indian culture.

Sudraka invokes Siva thus: "May the state of profound meditation which owing to the complete absorption caused by the absence of perception is fixed on Brahman, attained by Sambhu, who in forming the proper position of his body has his knees covered only by serpents, who has stopped the routine activity of all his senses by suspending the vital airs inside and who with the cessation of the activity of the sense organs is only the Self within himself, (in a word, who has attained what is technically known as 'nirvikalpa samadhi') protect you. May the throat of the Blue-throated One (Siva), comparable to a dark cloud on which the creeper-like arm of Gouri shines like a streak of lightning, protect you."

Kalidasa, emphasized both the Uma-Mahesvara, i.e. the couple aspect which Siva has like Vishnu with his Lakshmi, and his unique aspect half-male half-female known as Ardhanarisvara. Sudraka has dwelt only on the first and has pinpointed his unique aspect as a perfect Yogi. It must be borne in mind while appraising the likely effect of these representations that Yogic practices had come to be prized very highly as achievements by themselves during about a whole millenium. Attainment of this 'Samadhi' makes the Deity an ideal

One, both as a personal God and as the transcendental Principle.

A very much stronger appeal must have been made by the solemn statement made by Sudraka about himself in recommending the performance of his drama. Its purport runs: "King Sudraka ended his life by immolating himself after having studied the sacred lore and fine arts, after having a son, after performing the great horse-sacrifice, after getting sight through Siva's favour—sight both spiritual and physical, and having lived long." The mention of Siva's favour in regard to physical sight is significant. Sudraka is believed to have had some serious disease of the eyes cured through some Saiva vows or observances, just as later the poet Mayura, as already pointed out, was believed to have been cured of his leprosy through his prayers to the Sun-god. Tales of miracle-cures like these, and even more astounding than these, have continued to be the most potent force and the most effective propaganda for the spread of a cult.

The next dramatist Visakhadatta in the *Mudrarakshasa* puts in an invocation in the form of an interesting dialogue between Parvati and Siva suggesting small jealousies and great felicities of the Divine domestic life. "Who is this fortunate one that I see on your head?" asks Parvati, hinting a jealous reference to the female Ganga, the river. Siva cunningly answers: "It is the moon digit;" and Parvati rejoins: "I ask about the woman and not about the moon." But purposely misunderstanding her request Siva answers: "If you want to ask a woman about it and if you cannot believe the moon*, better ask your companion Vijaya." And so does Siva with his cunning and evasive replies repress Parvati's jealousy. The finale is domestic felicity and the dramatist desires his audience to be blessed by this ingenuity of his patron deity Siva.

Bana the next author, about 650 A.D., begins his *Harsha-charita*, biography of the emperor Harshavardhan, with an invocation to both Siva as Sambhu and to Uma. The former is described as the central pillar put up at the beginning of the construction of the city in the form of the three worlds. Mention of Uma as with eyes closed in joy produced by her putting her arms round the neck of Hara (Siva) brings be-

fore the readers' eyes the famous 'Alinganamurtis,' 'images of Siva and Parvati in embrace', a scene of serene domestic felicity.

Bana has further vouchsafed the information that he was himself a Saiva and had Siva as his household deity. He offered a high class standard worship to Siva before he set out on his journey to meet the emperor who had summoned him to his court through a special messenger. The main item of his worship consisted in bathing the deity with milk. Bana has incidentally mentioned mythological happenings which further imply the universal currency of worship of Siva in the linga-form among the elite and supply details of worship.

When Sarasvati was cursed to descend to the earth, Brahma comforted her and told her that her mundane sojourn would be short. He asked her to offer prayers to Tryambaka (Siva) who is described as not only 'Devadeva', 'gods' God', not only as 'Tribhuvanaguru', 'preceptor of the three worlds' but also as the promulgator of all the 'Vidyas,' 'learning' and hence perhaps specially recommended as the fittest deity for Sarasvati who herself is a goddess of learning. When Sarasvati descended to the earth, she put up a 'Sivalinga,' 'phallus' of sand, on the banks of a river and conducted her worship. It consisted of the 'Panchabrahma' which is to this day addressed to five aspects of Siva. Siva therefore has been tended to be worshipped among some Saivas and perhaps in specific regions, too, only in this form known as 'Panchamukhi' 'five-faced' Mahadeva. The 'Panchabrahma' prayer even now, at least in Maharashtra, is repeated by Saiva Brahmins while applying the sacred ashes, so dear to Siva and so specific to Saivism, to their bodies. The full worship of Siva whether offered by Sarasvati to the sand-phallus or by Bana to the phallus which was his household-deity is called 'ashtapushpika', 'eight-flowered' and is designed to conform to the fact of the eight forms of Siva.[3]

Bana's mention, in *Kadambari,* another work of his, of queen Vilasavati as having gone to the temple of Mahakala on the fourteenth of the dark half of some lunar month is a testimony to the great antiquity of the present observance of the day as a fast by many ordinary Saivas and most strict Saivas. On that day, visit to a Siva temple is considered to

be particularly meritorious. About a hundred years after Bana, Bhavabhuti represented Malati, the heroine of his play *Malatimadhava,* to have gone on a similar day to the temple of Samkara.[4] The context and the use made of the opportunity in the plot of the play make it quite clear that the arch manager Kamandaki having known that, as was the custom of the family, Malati would go to the temple of Samkara on that day, the day being the fourteenth of the dark half of the lunar month, took advantage of the occasion to bring about a chance meeting of Malati and her lover.[5]

One such day in every year, the 14th of the dark fortnight of the lunar month Magha (February) is singled out as 'Mahasivaratri'. It is a day of great religious merit and as such is observed by most Hindus. It is a public holiday all over India. Fairs are held in many places; pilgrimages are undertaken to such places as Kashi (Varanasi), Gokarna on the western coast and Ramesvaram at the southern-most point of India. Bhajan or prayers are arranged in Siva temples as a public and group event. Namadev, the great saint-preacher-poet of Maharashtra, who made such an impress on North India at to have his sacred tomb in the Panjab, and who lived between 1270 A.D. to 1350 A.D. has dwelt on the great merit-earning potentialities of this well-known fast-festival.

Bana's patron Harshavardhana is credited with some dramas and in at least two of them, even though he is known to have turned a devout and very active Buddhist later, he has invoked Siva. The invocation of the play *Priyadarsika* is contained in two verses, the first of which is devoted to Gouri and is perhaps unique in so far as Gouri gets precedence over Siva. The second which is addressed to Siva graphically describes Siva's discomfiture of Ravana, the ten-headed demon king of Lanka. It runs: "May Siva, who enraged when mountain Kailasa was tossed up, when His hosts were struck with dazed amazement, when Kumara (Skanda) dipped into his mother's lap, when Siva's serpent emitting poison was gazing wrathfully, had the ten-headed one (Ravana) going down into the nether world with the body pressed down by the pressure of His foot and was pleased as He was closely embraced by Uma in her fright, protect you." Harsha's play *Ratnavali* has a longer invocation of four verses. First two

of them are in honour of Gouri though her subordinate status to that of her husband Siva is very explicitly and even emphatically brought out in them. Mediately they too are in honour of Siva. The fourth is general. The third which is exclusively in praise of Siva runs: "May Siva, who was broadly smiling while pointing out to Devi how his destruction of Daksha's sacrifice was progressing when all the sacrificial fires were put out by the fall of His burning enraged look, when the distressed and distracted high priests of the sacrifice were tumbling down with their turbans stripped off by His hosts, when Daksha himself had begun to pray to Him for mercy, when Daksha's wives were wailing bitterly and when the gods themselves who were to be the recipients were running away from the scene, protect you." This is a reference to that exploit of Siva which is perhaps the strongest evidence pointing to an aspect in the composite nature of his Godhood which is not Vedic Aryan. And as the commentator points out the dramatist desires to convey and in fact conveys, the idea that Siva who is so terrific to those opposed to Him is so mild and tender towards those who worship Him and whom He therefore likes.

Bhavabhuti, rivalling with Kalidasa and writing in the first quarter of the 8th century from a place in Nagpur region appears to have been a Saiva and a devotee of the elephant-headed god Ganesa. He wrote three plays. All of them were enacted at the fairs of God Siva with the appellation Kalapriyanatha—perhaps the Linga, the object of worship in the temple, was set up in memory of one Kalapriya. * Two of them are concerned with the Vaishnava deity Rama, dramatizing some of the incidents described in the *Ramayana*. The invocations to both are very short and are either made in honour of the Abstract Principle or of Vak, the Speech or the great poets of the past. Bhavabhuti the Saiva faced a dilemma when he decided to write plays on Rama who had come to be loved and revered and whose life was sung in great poetry though incidentally and therefore sketchily by his great predecessor, Kalidasa. As a Saiva he could not invoke Vishnu or any Vaishnavite deity and as a dramatist he could see the impropriety of invoking Siva at the beginning of plays which depict Rama's life to glorify him. In the third play *Malati-*

madhava, a social drama, where his hands were unfettered by convention, Bhavabhuti has addressed one invocatory verse in honour of Siva and another in that of Ganesa. Though the invocation is in honour of Ganesa most of the verse is used in the description of the Tandava dance of Siva as a result of which Ganesa's trunk gets ruffled. The direct invocation of Siva reads: "May the matted hair of Bhutesa, Lord of creatures, tied up with the garlands of creeper-like serpents, from which waters of the Ganga are trickling on account of being pushed by the skulls forming His crest chaplet, the splendour of which is mixed up with the lightning-like flames of the fire issuing from His forehead eye, the crescent moon on which looks like the unopened white 'ketaka'-flower, protect you." It is seen that we have here a rather heavily and clumsily worded description of the standard form of Siva's upper face.

As against Bhavabhuti's sensibility and decorum stands the exclusivist spirit of a slightly earlier dramatist Bhatta Narayana. As his name indicates he was probably a Vaishnava by faith. His play *Venisamhara* describes some of the doings of the Pandavas, the proteges of Krishna. One can understand his invocations being in honour of a Vaishnavite deity. But Bhatta Narayana having addressed two verses in praise of Krishna turns in his last invocatory verse to Siva and makes what cannot but be construed to be a rather slighting reference to a great exploit of Siva. It reads: "May Dhurjati (Siva), who on the occasion of the burning of the cities of Maya was gazed on with affection by Devi (Parvati), with fright and confusion by demonesses, with compassion by sages endowed with internal peace, by Vishnu with a smile, with proudly drawing their weapons by demon warriors, who thus quelled the panic of their wives, and with joy by the gods, protect you." The feelings and emotions of various parties connected with the great exploit of destroying the three mysterious and dangerous cities of demons are here specifically mentioned. Whatever the incident or the natural phenomenon behind it, this feat was considered to be so difficult that not only is it dealt with in the *Puranas* but even in the *Mahabharata* (Karnaparvan) where we are told that in view of the difficult nature of the task set to Siva all the other gods

helped in various ways, Brahma driving the chariot and Vishnu turning himself into the bow which shot the fatal arrows. When Vishnu is represented in the mythology to have played such a subordinate role in the task of enabling Siva to rid the gods and the world of the great distress caused by the demons under the protection of their mysterious cities, it is only extremely sectarian spirit that could have impelled Bhatta Narayana to ascribe a superior attitude of condescension to Vishnu.

With all the exclusiveness of Vaishnavites if they found it necessary to speak of Siva's exploits it means that Siva with his great exploits had come to dominate the phallic aspect of his worship. The elite intellectuals placed before their public these services of Siva to humanity, his worshippers and the gods, in well-worded and appealing tales. 'Tripurasuravadha' or the killing of the demon of Tripura, observed as a feast even now as already mentioned is one of the most impressive ones and Bhatta Narayana has referred to it in his invocation. The invocatory verse of Bhavabhuti translated above has references to the great deed of Siva in taking the 'Halahala', poison. To cool himself against its effects, Siva is believed to have placed the moon on his head and to have worn the serpents on his body. There is also some reference to the Ganga streaming down his head.

The stage was thus set for artists, it is almost wholly the sculptor who got busy as in the case of Buddha, to translate the significant and impressive exploits into a medium that would present them visually to the worshippers and others in a more or less permanent form. A brief description of this development and its significance will have to be deferred to a later section. Here the reader must be introduced to the propagation of Saivism in the South.

In the present state of our knowledge it must be admitted that the Brahmin dynasty of the Pallavas who appear to have been converted to Saivism by the Tamil saint-poet Appar (7th century A.D.) gave a fillip to Saivism in the South.[6] Only a few kings of the dynasty appear from their names like 'Narasimha-Vishnu', 'Simha-Vishnu' to have adopted Vaishnavism. Appar, Sambandar and Sundarar are considered to be the most important Tamil hymners among the 63 Saiva Nay-

anmars or Saints who being canonised have their images put up in Saiva shrines for worship. Many of them have their images cast in bronze for Saiva worshippers to keep for household worship and for temple authorities to use for religious processions. Appar is ascribed to the first quarter of the 7th century and Sundarar to the close of the 8th century. And in this period there lived 17 others of the Saiva Nayanmars, thus giving us perhaps the most important 20 out of the grand total of 63 Saiva saints. What is more important than even the greatness of the three early saints, Appar, Sambandar and Sundarar, is the fact that at least one of the contemporary saints of Appar and Sambandar, who were themselves not only contemporaries but friends working in cooperation, was the Pandya king Ninra Sir Nedumara. He lived in the middle of the 7th century and his wife was a Chola princess and was converted to Saivism by Sambandar. His queen, Mangayarkkarasi, too and his minister Kulaccirai, came to be included among the early twenty Nayanmars. A Chola prince by name Pugal Chola was also a Nayanmar figuring in the *Periyapurana*. Even more important than this Nayanmar was Charumanperumal a contemporary of Sundarar, who helped the spread of Saivism in the Chera region of which he was the ruler. Kings of the three regions of Tamilnad, namely Chera, Chola and Pandya thus figure among the 63 Nayanmars. They are said to have travelled in the company of Sundarar in his pilgrimage of Saiva shrines in the Pandya region.[7] Another canonized saint Kurruva Nayanmar was one of the chieftains in the Padukotta region and still another Narasinga Munaiyaraiya was a chieftain of the territory bordering on Pallava dominion. Kotpuli Nayanmar, and Eyakon Kalikar Nayanmar were commanders of the armies of local chieftains. In addition to the queen Nayanmar already mentioned another lady Nayanmar was Karaikkal Ammaiyar, a Vaisya housewife whose songs form part of the canonical literature of the Saivas. She is believed to have had the singular merit of witnessing the dance of Nataraja in person in Tiruvalangadu near Madras and has a shrine dedicated to her in the Sundaresvara temple at Madura. Three of the other Nayanmars, Appar, Sambandar and Sundarar, have shrines dedicated to them on the hill famous for Skanda or Subrahmanya temple at Tiruchengode

in Salem district, a place well known for the Ardhanarisvara form of Siva. In the company of these Nayanmars, there is also the statue of the great Tamil Saiva author Manikkavachagar, who counts with them to form the famous quartet of Saiva Samayacharyas. Manikkavachagar who is known to have initiated a minister of a Pandya king into Saivism lived sometime between the 8th and the early part of the 9th century A.D. His name was Vadhavoor but he came to be significantly called Manikkavachagar, i.e. 'one dropping gems in his speech.' There is another famous temple dedicated to a saint, who was also the minister of a king at Tirupperundurai near Kumbakonam where a yearly festival is observed.

One Nayanmar, Siruthonda is even more important than these as his whole family is canonized. His image, his wife's image and the image of his son Sirala who is referred to as Siraladeva were held in such high esteem that in an inscription of Rajendra Chola I, 10th century A.D., in the great Brihadisvara temple at Tanjore the king refers to them. In the Ganapatisvara temple at Tiruchengattangudi, Tanjore District, from the benefactions of the later Cholas, 11th century, we learn that father and son had separate shrines and that a procession was led to take the son's image to the father's shrine at a festival.[8]

It is noteworthy that these early Saiva saint-poets of Tamilnad came from a number of different castes some of which rank very low in the social gradation. One of them at least was a Pariah, one a washerman, one potter, one oilman, one Shanar—the caste between which and the Maravan there has been an intermittent feud during almost a whole century,[9] one fisherman, at least seven Vaishyas, trading caste, at least three Vellalas among whom figures the great Appar, a number of Kshatriyas or noblemen and the rest, the largest bulk, Brahmins. This diversity of caste of the canonized and deified Saiva saints has had rather insignificant influence, if any, on social harmony in the multi-group-society formed by castes of Tamilnad.

The earliest temples and among them Siva temples hail naturally and in spite of the incredibly wide-spread destruction and revengefully aggressive defacement carried out almost systematically by the Muslim conquerors and their supporter

converts, from North India. But in none of them to judge by the descriptions of and reproductions from the temples at Bhumara, Nachna Kuthara and Khoh in Central India or those from Orissa, scenes depicting the exploits of Siva were either sculptured or painted. The temple itself had not yet attained the stage of development where it tended to represent especially to the faithful and the devout the abode of God, i.e. either as Mount Kailasa, which is the permanent abode of Siva or as Vaikuntha in the heaven where Vishnu resides.

Judging from the available sources and remains it appears to me that it is the sculptors of the great Rashtrakuta emperor Krishna III, working under his inspiration strengthened by the joy of his great victories which made him look like a world conqueror, who conceived and executed the tenth wonder of the world the magnificent rock-cut temple of Verula (Ellora) that gave impetus to the conception of the temple as typifying the permanent and ideal abode of God. The temples at Verula and the cave-temple of Gharapuri (Elephanta) in the harbour of Bombay excavated in the 8th century A.D. have a number of marvellous sculptures embodying illustrations of the many impressive tasks performed by Siva. But though they are perhaps the best representations, considered both as artistic executions and emotive stimuli, the sculpture depicting Siva's holding the Ganga on His head for the sake of Bhagiratha enshrined in the Pallava temple at Tiruchirapalli (Trichnopoly) is earlier than these by almost a century.

This fine representation of the greatest boon of Siva on India and its people enshrines one of the stupendous endeavours undertaken by her past leaders. Bhagiratha, the remote ancestor of Rama on whose intercession Siva, as already mentioned, undertook to hold the Ganga on His head and prevent the land being completely eroded, is reported to have undertaken endless pains to achieve his ends and has gone into linguistic usage as a type for infinite and incredibly perseverant pains. He is seen in the picture, though naturally Siva occupies the central front. Siva's greatness is very easily and naturally conveyed through his portrayal as unperturbed and almost placid with only the right leg a little bent for support and with his left hand resting at the left side on the

hip for additional support. Siva's being clad in a full dhoti strengthens the idea of the ordinary nature of the activity in which the wearer is engaged involving no special exertion.

Mythology asserts that Siva, who quite often, though inadvertently and in his simple nature, is found among their helpers, killed three demons to rid the gods and humanity of their troubles. Of these the demon Gaja appears to have been the least troublesome and terrific according to the standard accounts. And as far as I can see from the available material on the sculptural representations he is not treated in any of the temples north of the Krishna. The oft-reproduced representations of the Gajasamhara form are those from Dárasuram and Vazhuvoor in Tanjore. These representations and the other three reproduced by Gopinath Rao show Siva dancing a highly weird variety of his Tandava.[10] The dance posture combined with the feature of Siva holding the hide of the demon-elephant over His head with its head under his feet leads one to observe that it is the partiality of the Tamil Saivism for the Nataraja or dancing Siva form of the Deity that must have prompted the creation of this form. We must naturally understand the scene to have been enacted in the joy of triumph—an inference which must do violence to the mythology of the incident! In this connection I should like to remind the readers that Kalidasa has alluded to the habit of Siva to dance his Tandava at dusk holding a dripping hide of elephant over Him.[11] A Bengal king of the last quarter of the 12th century Ballalsena addressed an invocation to Siva in the act of executing his dusk-dance, 'sandhya-tandava.'[12]

The great Saiva shrines of Maharashtra and I think also of north Karnataka appear to have ignored the abovementioned achievement of Siva and that for good reasons. In the sources, one finds conflicting accounts about the actual killer of this demon who was after all not so invulnerable. In contrast, the Maharashtra shrines have excellent representations of Siva's another exploit which has Vedic antiquity. It is the killing of the demon Andhaka in which act he was helped by 'Matrikas', 'mothers.' Of the three—one in the 'Dasavatara' and one in the 'Kailasa' as Verula (Ellora) and one in Gharapuri (Elephanta) shrine—that in the Gharapuri temple is not only the most magnificant but the most inspiring one.

The greatest feat of Siva was after all the killing of Tripura who with his mysterious cities had proved so troublesome. As I have already mentioned, it has impressed itself on the mind of India, has been often sung by poets and has been so well immortalized in the Hindu observance of the Tripura-fifteenth every year! There are at least two representations of this exploit in the Verula shrines and quite a number in the shrines of Tamilnad. The finely chiselled and gracefully standing figures of Siva's 'Tripurantaka' ('Tripurades-troyer') forms as those in the great Brihadisvara temple of Tanjore (Banerjea, pl. XXXII) and at Tirupurambiam (Srinivasan, pl. 61) not only do violence to the standard mythology on the episode but are also detrimental to the evocation of the appropriate emotion. The first is a bronze figure in the round and the second also appears to be so. The sculptural representations of the episode in the Kailasanatha temple at Kanchi, on the gopura towers of the Nataraja temple at Chidambaram and in the Sunderesvara temple at Madura follow the mythology in their portrayals, but are inferior in their execution as the figure of Siva and the position of his bow are not adequately sized and postured.[13]

At this stage it is desirable to acquaint the readers with some of the sectarian ideas on the subject of the pantheon of the sect expounded in Samskrit texts or by the great ascetics of Saiva schools and 'maths', monasteries. First, the reader should note, in evaluating the remarks in the foregoing paragraphs, that "the dance of Siva takes its origin from the story of the manner in which he sought to curb the arrogance of the sages living in the Taraka forest", and that among the nine standard varieties of Siva's dance, while 'Samharatandava', 'destruction-dance' is listed in the generic term of Samhara or destruction, 'Tripuratandava',[14] 'dance at the time of destroying Tripura' is specifically designated in terms of the name of the demon destroyed.

The particular school of the Saiva sect which wielded great influence over almost the whole of India between about 750 A.D. and 1250 A.D. was what is known as the Saiva Siddhanta school. Krishna III, the creator of 'Kailasa' at Verula honoured the ascetic Gaganasiva of the Saivasiddhanta school, which had its monastery, it appears, somewhere in

southern Maharashtra, perhaps at Karhad in Satara District. And though Isanasiva, the ascetic preceptor of Gaganasiva, might not have been the 'rajaguru', royal preceptor, of the Chola king Rajaraja I, he and another are mentioned in his inscriptions and in those of his great successor Rajendra Chola (1012-1044 A.D.). These ascetics and their disciples had considerable influence in the court of the later Chola kings. The importance of the ascetics of this school waned in Central India by about 1225 A.D., about which time, too, in Tamilnad they ceased to matter very much. Ramanuja's activity in the cause of Vaishnavism, the great prestige of the Kamakotti and even more so that of the Sringeri monastery of Sankaracharya, and further west and north the Vaishnava activities of Madhvacharya naturally led to this eclipse.[15]

Of the sixteen forms of Siva recognized in the Saiva-siddhanta, inscriptions actually record only Uma-Mahesvara, Gangadhar and Natyesvara forms; and Uma, Shadanana, Ganesa and Sarasvati too are mentioned as Saiva deities.[16]

As observed elsewhere by me[17] the earliest representation of dancing Siva, i.e. Siva as Nataraja, is the one in a panel of Siva temple at Bhumara in Nagod district. Next come the fine specimens from Badami and Aihole in Karnatak followed by half a dozen from Verula in Maharashtra, those of Bhuvanesvara in Orissa coming soon after. Bhattasali[18] who has reproduced a number of such images from Dacca and Tippera Districts, one of them being that of a six-foot image, says that there is a village by name Natesvara in the vicinity of Rampal where images of dancing Siva were found and that an image of Siva in this form was still in worship at a village called Natghar in Tippera district.

With all this history and mythology of the form of Siva known as Nataraja, it will be conceded by all that the Nataraja that India cherishes and relishes and the Nataraja that the artistic and art-admiring world knows and values is the creation *par excellence* of the Tamilian sculptors or rather bronze-casters. For as far as I can make out free standing icons or images in the round of this form of Siva are not available in stone. The stone representations are all bas-reliefs, however high.

This form of Siva is the principal deity under worship in

more than one of the great temples of Tamilnad. But the Nataraja temple of Chidambaram is held in such high esteem and so superior in merit to all others that it is customary to speak of it as 'Koyil' or the temple. About the ubiquity and the indespensability of this form of Siva, Srinivasan observes: "In all Siva temples, there will be a separate shrine for Nataraja usually facing south."[19]

Among the Nayanmars, though the sacred *Tevaram* or *Devaram* contains the hymns of Appar and Sambandar the most representative types are Siruthonda[20] Nayanmar and Chandesa Nayanmar who too lived in the 7th century. Both were Brahmins and the former was the commander-in-chief of his king's army. Both did very heinous acts in discharge of their duties as Siva Bhaktas. Chandesa was considered to be the head of all to such an extent that even the accounts of Saiva temples were written in his name. Saiva-worshippers are enjoined on their visit to Siva temples to take leave of him before departing from the temple. In his honour, as in that of Markandeya of Puranic mythology, a special Siva form has come into being. There is an image of Siva restricted to the Chola region, a good specimen of which is carved in a niche of the outer wall of the 'Navagraha' temple at Gangaikondasholapuram, Tanjore District, and another in a 'gopura' of the famous Nataraja temple at Chidambaram and still another in Kailasanath temple at Kanchi (Conjeevaram). It is known as Chandesanugrahamurti.[21] It glorifies the Siva-devotee and not God Siva; but in so far as Siva is portrayed as crowning the suppliant Chandesa with a flower-garland, Chandesa receives worship along with Siva over and above the worship he gets along with the other sixty-two Nayanmars. His further speciality is that all the flowers removed from the image of Siva are placed on his statue.

The Paraiyan (untouchable caste) Nayanmar, Nanda, and the later saint Manikkavachagar were blessed with a vision of Siva in a special form known as Dakshinamurti. The form is not only mild four-handed one but is in the seated posture of great significance without any of the usual accompaniments. Even the matted hair are either absent or are so managed that the head appears crowned with a usual 'mukuta' or crown of a diety. The preceptorial posture seated on a high

stool with the right foot resting on the dwarf at the base and the left leg bent and foot resting on the right thigh is quite unique.[22] It is not seen in the case of any other deity. The preacher and preceptor gods are Lord Krishna and Lord Buddha. Vishnu, Rama, Ganesa or Surya are not thought of as engaged in this activity. Siva was first thought of as a Yogi but sometimes also as a teacher with a book in his hands. But He does not appear to have been portrayed as a preceptor in this particular posture before in South India or at any time in North India. I think this particular unique form of Siva is the consequence of the reaction to Vaishnava challenge working in conjunction with the enthronement of the 'guru' or preceptor as an initiator into the doctrinal and procedural tents of the Saiva faith laid down by Tirumula Nayanmar perhaps for the first time in vernacular, Tamil in this case. If 'guru' or proceptor was a *sine qua non* of the system the most proper 'guru', the crown of 'gurus', is Lord Mahesa Himself. Lord Krishna having preached philosophy of personal God and selfless performance of duty in the *Bhagavadgita,* he is *par excellence* the earliest preceptor in the Hindu pantheon. The Dakishinamurti form of Siva depicts Siva as the great preacher and the supreme preceptor.

Siruthonda Nayanmar is like Siva himself, almost a human replica of the Divine Siva. The marriage of Siva with Parvati has been depicted in sculptures scattered over the whole length and breadth of India from about the 5th century to the 16th or the 17th. Images of Siva with Uma or Parvati either in the embrace-pose sitting or standing, or in the ordinary close-to-each-other-pose, are similarly met with outside Tamilnad temples. The form of Siva with Parvati sitting on his left lap is immortalized in the Kailasa temple of Verula (Ellora) in connection with the masterly portrayal of Ravana's utter discomfiture. And similar images of the couple without Ravana-complication are seen in stone and bronze almost anywhere in India. But the form, "murti", of Siva in the Somaskanda type, is, as far as I can see, confined only to Tamilnad. I do not mean to assert that in some images or sculptures of Siva in his Tandava dances or in his three encounters with demons, viz. Tripura, Andhaka and Gaja, Skanda or Kartikeya may not have been protrayed along side of the frightened or

entranced Parvati; but what I want to convey is that a scene of supreme domestic felicity with the husband Siva on one side and the wife Uma sitting or even standing a little to his left with the "ever-boy" Kumara Skanda sitting or standing as a tiny little child between them is seen only or mostly in the sculptures of Tamilnad.

The earliest sculptural representation of the family triad hails from the Dharmaraja ratha of Mamallapur near Chingleput and dates from the Pallava period and is reproduced in a *Memoir of the Archaeological Survey of India* dealing with Pallava architecture.[23] The later sculpture of this form in the Vaidyanatha temple at Vaithisvarankoil between Chidambaram and Mayavaram in Tanjore district which portrays a dancing Kumara between the composedly seated and finely chiselled figures of Siva and Parvati—Siva without either Ganga, moon or even one serpent and holding axe in one hand and deer in the other, has his two frontal hands disposed in the protective and the blessing postures, and Parvati looking on contentedly has her right hand in the lotus-holding posture, the left hand resting with flat palm on the seat—is one of the masterpieces of the sculptural representations of domestic felicity and repose.[24] About the ubiquity and popularity of this form of Saiva deity Srinivasan observes: "This image is to be seen as metal 'vigraham' in almost every Siva temple, as it is the *utsava beram* (image for the festive occasions) taken out for all processions. Sculpturally also Somaskanda Murti images were carved out even during Pallava days behind the 'linga' in the main shrines. In Tirukalikundrum (hill shrine), Kancheepuram (Conjeevaram Ekambaranath shrine), and in Kailasanath temple, we have fine representation of this image on the back wall of the central shrine behind the 'linga'."[25]

No other deity of the Hindu pantheon, much less of the standard pentad, not even the human-hero deities Rama and Krishna, both of whom had sons and both of whom have tended to be represented not only in the company of their Divine consorts but also with a brother or brothers, has been represented with His wife and son together. Domestic felicity and repose have come to be concentrated, ironically enough, in Siva, the deity associated with cremation-ground and

bizarre tastes, complete unworldliness and so on with all negations of positive bliss as humans of even highest morals understand it. May we not look upon this development as a supreme group-exercise in compensatory synthesis?

Whatever the motivation or however complex it may be, the idea seems to have caught on. In the first or second decade of the 20th century the Trivandrum School of Arts produced a fine ivory version of Uma-Mahesvara not only with Skanda standing by Parvati's left side but with the addition of the elephant-headed newer deity Ganesa standing similarly by the right side of Siva. It makes a complete composition and declares and completes religious harmony. For the patron deity of Travancore royal family is not Siva but Vishnu reclining on Sesha, the hooded serpant!

5

GANESA AND SKANDA:

A CONTRAST IN ORIGIN, FORM AND FUNCTION

Of the pair Ganesa and Skanda, the latter deity is by far the older, and the former in its form, though not in other aspects, is international. I shall begin with an account of Skanda who, along with Siva, who has been represented as his father throughout Indian history and Hindu mythology, has been the earliest of the deities of the current Hindu pantheon to be mentioned not only as receiving worship but as being popular. I have referred to Patanjali's statement of the 2nd century B.C. about Skanda's images being sold for additional source of state revenue in the 3rd century B.C. Perhaps Skanda as Skanda and also under his other name Visakha was in worship even before Panini, i.e. before 300 B.C. Ganesa or Ganapati on the other hand is one of the most modern deities of the Hindu pantheon, entering into mythology not earlier than the 3rd or the 4th century A.D.

Skanda under the selfsame or any other title is positively not a Vedic deity nor even an early Vedic personage. Skanda figures as identified with the great learned sage Sanatkumara, who is one of the perennially youthful celibates of Hindu mythology, in one of the *Upanishads*[1] in almost a casual manner.

In the *Baudhayanadharmasutra,* before 300 B.C., an offering or libation is enjoined to be made, among other deities, to Sanatkumara. And among his other epithets we have all the most important of the appellations of Karttikeya, viz. Skanda, Visakha, Mahasena, Shanmukha and Subrahmanya. He is even called Shashthi, which may be a short form of his later descriptive name Shashthipriya, one to whom the 6th day is dear. In the *Manavagrihyasutra,* which may be a century or so earlier than the above work, among other deities

like Mahadeva both Virupaksha and Mahasena are the recipients of some offerings.[2] In the *Bhagavadgita*,[3] which is placed in the 3rd century B.C. or rather assigned to a period before the 2nd century B.C., Lord Krishna as the Virata Purusha or the Supreme Soul identifying himself with the highest specimen of every group of things picked out Skanda as the greatest leader of armies, 'senani', and identified Himself with him. This is the more noteworthy as Lord Krishna in the same vein selects Rama, the son of Dasaratha and an earlier incarnation of Vishnu, one of the three Supreme Gods of Hindu mythology, as the greatest among "wielders of weapons" and names Sankara, the reputed father of Skanda and one of the three Supreme Gods, as the leader among the traditional eleven Rudras.

In the *Baudhayanagrihyasutra,* in the 'sulagava' sacrifice among the deities to whom it is offered are both the wife and the son of Rudra. In another rite, too, along with Rudra his wife and son are to be given an offering. In the *Parisêśha* text of the same work, about the 1st century A.D., Skanda, Karttikeya, the son of Krittika, is referred to as both "Brahmanyaputra" and as "Shadasya" and is called the 'best of gods'. His other epithets of Kumara, Guha and Visakha are also used. It is noteworthy that he is also addressed as Sanatkumara.[4]

The earliest mention of Ganesa as such or as Ganapati is found in Hala's *Saptasati,*[5] an anthology of Prakrit (vernacular) floating versified literature, and that too only in a light manner, though there is also a veiled and not altogether intelligible reference to some mysterious power of Ganesa over the sea.

The contrast in the early positions of the two deities existing till about the middle of the 7th century A.D. is well illustrated by an invocation at the beginning of a popular Samskrit work, the *Panchatantra,* which must thave been written before 500 A.D. Its invocation calls upon Brahma, Rudra (Samkara), Kumara (Skanda), Hari (Vishnu), Varuna, Yama, Fire, Indra, Kubera, Moon, Sun, Sarasvati, Sea, the Yugas, Mountains, Wind, Earth, Serpents, Siddhas, Rivers, Asvins, Sri, Diti, Aditi's sons (gods), the Mothers (Brahmi, Māhesvari, Chandi, Varahi, Vaishnavi, Kaumari, Chamunda and Charchita), the Vedas, the Tirthas (sacred

places), Sacrifices, Ganas (Siva's followers and servants), Vasus, Sages and the Planets to protect "us". It is to be noted that not only Kumara figures among the principal first deities but also that though Siva's Ganas are there, their later leader, our Ganesa, is conspicuous by non-mention. In the list also figure the Mothers in whose company, as will be seen later, Ganesa almost regularly figures in the sculptural representations from about the 7th or 8th century A.D. Among the 'matris', who as Saktis are conceived as consorts of the Great Gods, there is one for Skanda and is named after his popular appellation of Kumara, the youthful. This is eloquent testimony to the late origin of Ganesa and the early importance of Skanda as a deity.

I have already mentioned the worship offered to Lord Mahasena by Rama's mother Kausalya according to the *Ramayana* when Rama started on his exile, praying to him among other deities, of whom Ganesa is not one, to protect her dear son. Even in the *Vayupurana* Skanda is referred to as *'Sarvalokesvara Prabhu'* or Supreme God.

That Skanda is the son of Siva is narrated in the *Ramayana,* the *Mahabharata* and in the *Vayupurana*[6] which is the earliest of the standard eighteen *Puranas.* Kalidasa, generally placed in the fourth century A.D., is later than the last-mentioned source. He composed a whole semi-epic, a poem of seventeen cantos, to describe the birth and exploits of this deity and lovingly called it *Kumarasambhava,* fixing upon the deity's appellation which enshrines its perennial youthfulness. That Kalidasa was evidently enamoured of the extraordinary nature of the deity perhaps even more than of the great glories of the dynasty of Raghu, which he narrated in another and a longer semi-epic called *Raghuvamsa,* becomes clear from his references to him even in the latter work. Thrice at least he has referred to Skanda, either as 'Shadanana', 'six-faced one', 'Karttikeya', 'son of Krittikas' or merely as 'Harasunu', 'son of Hara or Siva', to compare the martial greatness of some of the heroes of *Raghuvamsa.* In the *Meghaduta* he seems to have sent his cloud messenger purposely a little off the straight track, setting his commentators the task of attempting the more or less unsuccessful identification of Devagiri, where according to him God Skanda permanently resides. Under

the pretext of advising the cloud for successful discharge of its mission, Kalidasa shows his tender feelings for the deity by referring to the god's mount, the peacock, its fondness for dance at the sight of clouds, and Parvati's fondness for Skanda, though he is in one way 'Pavaki' or the son of Fire. It is her fondness for her son that prompts her to adorn herself with the colourful feather of his peacock dropped by it in its ecstatic dance. The great poet's version of the origin and form of the deity and his laudatory account of the god's great exploit must have helped to fix in the elite and the popular mind the details of the origin and form of this deity. I shall give a very brief resume of the origin based on the accounts in the *Ramayana* and the *Kumarasambhava*.

In the main outline, the two accounts agree to enable us to conclude first, that though Siva's fatherhood of Skanda is physical, Parvati's or Uma's motherhood of him is either putative or adoptive. Second, in the bearing of Skanda in his embryonic stage and in the birth and the early rearing somehow Fire ('Agni'), the Pleiades ('Krittika') and the river Ganges ('Ganga') were concerned. Third, that it was as an infant that Skanda was given in Parvati's charge and thus came to be assured of her motherhood of him. We are asked to believe by all authorities, mythological or poetic, that Skanda was so-called because it was Siva's dropped ('skanna') semen that appropriately placed developed into the child, Skanda. As Fire was mystically concerned in the bearing of 'Siva's semen, before it could give the world the child Skanda, the latter is 'Agnisunu' or as Kalidasa has it 'Pavaki', 'Pavaka' meaning fire. As the river Ganges bore the developing embryo at some stage, Skanda is 'Gangeya', 'son of Ganga.' As the Pleiades, too, bore the embryo and suckled the child it is 'Karttikeya', 'son of Krittika'. The Krittikas or the constellation of the Pleiades consists of six stars. The child Skanda as their son can be appropriately called 'Shanmatura,' 'one with six mothers.' To cope with the simultaneous sucking of six mothers the child Skanda miraculously developed six mouths and faces and is significantly named 'Shanmukha', 'six-faced.' This last epithet of the deity is the most usual one by which he is known in Tamil India, where he is very popular, his temples exist in large number and his worship is

widespread.

Among the gods of the Hindu pantheon Skanda or Shanmukha stands apart as having the largest number of heads, though he is not always represented with all the six and though quite often in his ordinary sitting posture in the South Indian images he is usually represented with only one head. Brahma had five faces before one of His heads was cut off by Siva for some arrogance on his part. Siva himself has only five heads at the most. Like Him, his so-called son and another member of the current pentad of deities, Ganesa, too, has in one form the maximum of five heads. Hanuman, one of the lesser deities as we shall see, is sometimes represented with five heads. The famous Trimurti or the not-so-famous Dattatreya of Maharashtrian spread has only three heads. In the matter of hands, which must be a symbol of strength and power, among all the deities of the Hindu pantheon though Siva is represented with four, six, eight, ten, twelve and even sixteen and eighteen arms, he is rivalled by Devi, another member of the pentad. Devi has, too, in one form eight or sixteen arms. Even Ganesa who in one esoteric cult-form has sixteen arms may be said to compete with Siva. Skanda or Karttikeya has either two or four arms if he is portrayed with one face and twelve when he is given his standard number of six heads. The banner and also the mount of Skanda is the typical Indian bird peacock on which he is portrayed as riding in a number of early images of the diety.

Shanmukha or Skanda is known as 'Shashthipriya,' one who is fond of the sixth day of the month. Mythology makes him quite a youth when he was only six days old. His special mission, the task for which alone mythology relates the gods conceived the idea of a son of Siva, was to fight and kill the terrible demon Taraka by name. He accomplished it on the 6th day of the bright half of the lunar month Margasirsha when he was only six days old, a month which according to Lord Krishna in the *Bhagavadgita* was the best of the months and the 1st day of which is described as 'Devadipavali', 'feast of lights of gods.' It was on that occasion that the gods consecrated him as the general, 'senani', of all the divine armies.

The Vedic people have left numerous traces of the various kinds of foes they met in India or even perhaps before they

entered this country. The most dreaded foes were no doubt the folks who are designated as the Asuras. In later mythology Daityas and Danavas are added to the list and quite often as indistinguishable from the Asuras. The Asuras were not only the people's own foes against whom they piteously invoked their gods, and especially their martial god Indra, but were even the tormentors of their gods. As a matter of fact, in the later Vedic literature there is depicted a regular feud between the Suras or Devas and the Asuras or demons. In the *Chhandogya Upanishad* the endeavour of these two groups to get true knowledge about the values that should be pursued and cultivated is described. It shows the Devas or gods, represented by their leader Indra, in the most favourable light as moral and spiritual beings prepared to undergo long training and practice in the pursuit of truth, while their opponents, the Asuras or demons, represented by their leader Virochana, as being easily satisfied with mundane prosperity and show.[7] In later mythology one Virochana is represented as the son of Pralhad, the famous devotee of Vishnu. Vishnu for the sake of the gods and to protect the honour of his devotee assumed the man-lion, 'Narasimha', incarnation and killed Pralhad's father Hiranyakasipu. But Virochana, Indra's rival, must be an earlier one; for Pralhad's son Virochana is the father of Bali.*

Two intellectual and spiritual leaders of the Asuras and Daityas well-known to the epics and the Puranas are Sukra and Maya.[8] The former also known as Kavi, Usanas or as Usanas Kavi was the formulator of military science and controller of the strategy of the demons and as such is mentioned in some Vedic literature.[9] The latter was the exponent of the science and art of architecture, though in one of the *Puranas* knowledge of this is also ascribed to the former.[10] Taraka, the demon, had three sons and they were friends of Maya. The latter had built for them the three mysterious cities, which together personified give us the famous trouble-maker of the gods, Tripurasura, whom, as we know, Siva killed. What happened was that Siva certainly destroyed one of the cities, the one that was in the sky; for some of the accounts of Skanda's life occurring in the *Puranas* make him a companion of the demon Bana in the copper city.[11]

It thus appears that Skanda's killing of Taraka demon pulled the trigger of the feud between the demons on the one hand and the gods and their proteges, humanity, on the other. In the pest-ridding campaign, sometimes, strange in appearance yet befitting the wayward and pre-Aryan component of Saivism, Siva, His consort and Skanda even sided with the demons, and the contribution of the Vaishnavite section of the Hindu pantheon is by far the more important and impressive.

As against the two Supreme Gods, Siva and Vishnu, who have more than one demon-killing exploit to their credit, Skanda, like his adoptive mother Parvati or Durga, killed only one for the specific purpose of whose destruction he was born. In the Vaishnavite section of Hindu mythology under similar circumstances the Supreme God would have incarnated Himself for the purpose, accomplished the deed and, if there was no further work to be done in the cause of gods or humanity, would have retired. Skanda after discharging the specific task remained the head of one group of Siva's attendants.

The origin and rise of Skanda though different from those of the gods of the Vaishnavite section of the pantheon are more or less clear, and recorded fairly early in the socio-religious literature and history. His reputation as a martial god continued down to the 6th or the 7th century A.D. Though it cannot be safely asserted that there are no complexities in the formation of this deity, yet it is clear that bewildering affiliations and identifications are so few that they may be ignored in the perspective of the long history. Much less is there any contrariety of fused traits in Skanda's nature. Just the opposite in all these respects is the case of his so-called younger brother Ganesa, the elephant-headed god.

Ganesa or Ganapati, who is a member of the current pentad of Gods in regular household-worship according to the sacred injunctions on the subject, is the only deity of the Hindu pantheon composed of deities, who is there in His own right and not as being connected with one of the Supreme Gods, and yet He is therianthropic. The case of the monkey-faced god, Hanuman or Maruti stands on a different footing because he does not rank with the great gods of the pantheon and he comes in primarily as the devout servant and mount

of Rama, an incarnation of one of the Supreme Gods. Second, the mythology about the origin or birth and transformation of Ganesa is both late and confused.[12]

The points that stand out very clear through all the confusion are: First, that the elephant-head of the deity is a relic of its non-god existence and not a later substitution for its human head. Thus a person who was anthropomorphic was not turned into a therianthropic deity, but a theriomorphic spirit on its rise to godhood needed an apology for its animal, in this case elephant, head. And this was provided through the confused mythology. Second, no exploit the performance of which in the cause of gods or of humanity should have entitled its author to godhood was credited to this deity. Third, that though he is said to be the son of Siva and Parvati, there is absolutely no indication, in these myths, of Siva having played the part of his biological father; and that Parvati's motherhood of him is clearly putative, adoptive or at best mysteriously ectogenic and non-biological. Fourth, that his prominent activity was that of a doorkeeper and a guard of Parvati's apartments and that in his zeal for his duty he crossed even his own supposed father Siva so much that the latter got incensed at his insolence.

As for the chopping off of Ganesa's human head by Siva we may hold that the incident was invented to account for the strange head of the deity, when Ganesa came to be recognized as such. All this renders it probable that Ganesa was an elephant-headed 'gana' or attendant of Parvati who because of Parvati's favour and Siva's making amends for his chastisement came to be enthroned as the leader of one group of Siva's 'ganas' or attendants. That Siva's ganas or attendants were queer beings having faces of different kinds of animals is stated in many mythological accounts. We know that other demi-godlike beings and malevolent spirits, too, in the same mythology were conceived as having animal heads and faces.[13]

The last fact leads to the fifth point, which is the most interesting from the point of view of a student of the sociology of religion. It reveals the romance of the rise of a godhead out of a malevolent spirit. The romance which can be established as a historical and social fact sets the question of the casuation of such a transformation. And it is this last

problem that defies a perfectlly rational and reasonable explanation.

Most of the dozen or so epithets by which Skanda is known are explained by the circumstances of his birth and by his exploits as narrated in the mythology. In the case of Ganesa or Ganapati this very common appellation of his is itself not quite clearly logical. In the sense of Ganesa's being the leader of hordes of Siva, Skanda and perhaps even the attendant Bhringi has better claims to that designation. The difficulty can be obviated by making him the lord of Parvati's hordes, but mythology does not vouchsafe such hordes to Parvati. Gajanana, Ganesa's another epithet, is moulded by his standard physical form, elephant-headed. He is Ekadanta, one-tusked, because having lost the other in an encounter with that irascible incarnation of Vishnu, Parasurama,[14] whom mythology depicts as having learnt his military skill from Siva, he had only one intact. The broken one he is represented as carrying in one of his four hands. He is hardly ever portrayed with less than four hands. There are some epithets in later mythology, particularly sectarian and esoteric, which are clearly those of Siva or which were applied to Siva but have been appropriated by Ganesa's votaries for their patron deity. The epithet derived from his mother-situation, Dvaimatura, two-mothered, supports my contention stated above that Parvati or Uma was Ganesa's adoptive or putative mother.

The epithet that establishes the transformation of a malevolent spirit into a beneficent and even kindly and pliant deity is Vinayaka.[15] It has been suggested that Vinayaka may signify 'distinguished leader' and thus may be a paraphrase of the common appellation, Ganesa. But the suggested etymology is more than doubtful; and sacred literature of the Hindus establishes the early currency of the epithet Vinayaka as applied to a malevolent spirit and the existence of a spirit or deity called 'Vighna' or 'Vinayaka'. As a matter of fact we can trace the existence of Vinayakas or Vinayaka as a constituent of the popular pantheon badly needing to be pacified to avoid major personal ills, from about the 5th or the 6th century B.C. to about the 2nd or the 3rd century A.D. And during this long period of about 7 to 9 centuries Ganesa as an entity, and not as an appellation occasionally bestowed on

Siva or even Vishnu, is conspicuous by its absence in archaeology, art, literature, excepting its floating vernacular section, and even in mythology.

Ganapati's debut in mythology affords further corroboration of the viewpoint stated above. It is in the *Vayupurana*, the oldest of the *Puranas* that by a palpably forced identification, Ganapati is imposed on Nikumbha. Kshemaka or Nikumbha[16] is one of the attendants of Siva who led a horde or 'gana' of that God. The *Vayupurana* tale is intended to state and justify the fact of Bhairava being the guardian deity of Varanasi or Kasi. The whole episode is not a logically compact unit. As usual in such after-thoughts the historical event is the core. In this case it is that of a certain king having no son his queen made vows to a deity and was yet unsuccessful in the fulfilment of her desire. Some circumstance about the same time devastated the city. And the old patron deity of the place was changed, either by the reigning family or by the people and the king, for a new one. This was Bhairava, terrific form of Siva, who has remained the guardian of Varanasi (Kasi) for all these centuries.

The tale says that Siva desiring to abide at Kasi and not finding either an appropriate place there or its people willing to set up His shrine entrusted Kshemaka or Nikumbha with the task. Nikumbha went about it in a rather round about manner. He appeared in the dream of a barber of Kasi and recommended him to put up a shrine of his on the outskirts. The devout or rather terrified barber did it. It is clear that the shrine put up by a poor barber could only have been of the usual small 'devali' type, either a sort of a cubicle or a small hut. We are not given any indication about the actual form of the image of the deity which the barber dutifully put up. But whatever the form, perhaps only a triangular stone, which lithic form and shape came later to be identified as Ganapati, the deity became famous for granting sons to sonless or childless couples. The queen of the king of Kasi became its devotee to acquire a son but failed to have one. And the king in wrath uprooted the shrine and the deity. The deity Nikumbha we are told was none other than Vinayaka Ganapati. Vinayaka got wild and devastated the city. This gave Siva an opportunity to lodge himself in the favour of the

people of Kasi—what miracle He worked we are not informed —who installed Bhairava at the spot previously chosen by the barber for Nikumbha-Vinayaka. Even in this episode Ganapati-Vinayaka though powerful enough to be benevolent yet shows himself mightily malevolent as Vinayaka. Not only did this Ganapati act as Vinayaka but Vinayakas in the plural as capable malevolent spirits are recognized in the *Vayupurana* just as they are in both the epics *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*.[17] And in the two epics it is either asserted in so many words or suggested that they must be pacified.

In the *Vayupurana* the reader is assured that the house in which Siva is either prayed to or worshipped remains free from the malevolent activities of Vinayaka.[18]

The references to Ganesa in the third book of the *Mahabharata*, it is instructive to note, bear affinity to the description of the activity of the malevolent spirits, the four Vinayakas who are named in the *Manavagrihyasutra*[19] in the sub-section which is designated "*Vinayakakalpa*" or "The pacificatory rites for Vinayaka." In the *Baudhayanadharmasutra*[20], the spirit or diety Vighna, 'Obstacle,' is given most of the epithets of Ganapati, like Vinayaka, Hastimukha (elephant-faced), Vakratunda (mouth-turned), Ekadanta (one-toothed) and Lambodara (pot-bellied). In view of the esoteric nature of the later sect based on the worship of this deity and known as the Ganapatya sect, it should be noted with more than passing interest that the pacificatory oblation to be offered to Vinayaka according to the *Manavagrihyasutra* was to contain among other things, meat, fish (cooked and uncooked) and various kinds of wines. More or less similar pacificatory rites for mollifying Vinayaka—it should be marked that only one Vinayaka in the singular is mentioned—are laid down by Yajnavalkya about the 2nd or the 3rd century A.D. We may therefore conclude that by Yajnavalkya's time one Vinayaka had come to supersede the concept of four or more, making its identification with Ganapati, or the imposition of Ganesa on it, easier.

In the text of the *Manavagrihyasutra* as a part of the complete and composite rite of pacification, the priest on behalf of the performer was enjoined to proceed to the 'house' 'shrine' of Ambika for the completion of the observance. In

the six-to-eight centuries later work of Yajnavalkya, Vinayaka is actually described as the son of Ambika. So even the second stage in the process of identification or imposition was already achieved.

In the *Baudhayanagrihyapariseshasutra*,[21] a work which according to the editor of the work, R. Shama Sastri, is post-Christian, and may be assigned to about the same time as the *Yajnavalkyasmriti*, among the many rites, designed either for pacification or for prosperity, occurs one for the pacification of Vinayaka in the singular. Among the many invocations to the spirit under various epithets there is one which speaks of it as 'hasti-mukha' or elephant-faced, an epithet applied to Vighna and Vinayaka in the *Baudhayanadharmasutra* as we have already seen.

Thus before the 3rd century A.D. we have one of the earlier many Vinayakas, the elephant-headed one, identified as Ganapati and described as the son of Ambika. He retained till then his malevolent character as he was invoked also as both 'Vighna', 'Obstacle incarnate' or 'Vighnesvara', 'Lord of obstacles.' Only one step further, and that a very radical transformation, was needed to enthrone Ganesa being the Lord of obstacles, as the Destroyer or Remover of obstacles. Such transformations inhere in the very nature of early religio-magical system of beliefs. One who is the lord of anything if propitiated can be trusted to control and subdue the thing he is lord of. Especially is this the case in the system of beliefs where One Supreme God to meet all situations, to which frail humanity is so frequently liable, is not conceived of, but instead, specific deities with specific functions, with two towering over all and conceived of as One Supreme Entity in only the higher philosophical system of thought, were and are the components of the pantheon as in Hinduism. So Vinayaka, the trouble-maker, becomes the much-prayed-to trouble-averter Ganesa.

The above-mentioned transformation must have been completed before the 7th century A.D. though apart from the enigmatic references in Hala's *Saptasati* there is no mention of Ganesa as a deity direct or indirect in literature before the 6th century A.D. In the final redaction of the *Mahabharata* he figures as the writer to whom Vyasa dictated the epic.

Varahamihira writing in the 6th century A.D. in his chapter on icons speaks of Ganapati as a two-handed, pot-bellied, elephant-faced and one-toothed 'Lord of the Ganas.'[22] In the Devgadh temple, which Vats dated as about 500 A.D., occurred the image of Ganesa seated within a panel on a pilaster. It can be conceived as the representation of a Gana rather than that of the deity Ganesa or Ganapati Vinayaka. In the Siva temple at Bhumara, more or less in the same region as Devgadh, a little to the north of Jabalpur, on the other hand, there was not only an image of this deity on a medallion of the temple-wall but also one two-handed finely worked and biggish image in the round. And we may fix upon this Bhumara image as the earliest extant sculptural representation of the deity Ganapati-Vinayaka as distinct from Ganesa or Vinayaka as a Gana, an attendant, of Siva. The temple and its ruins are dated by R. D. Banerji as those of the 6th century A.D. It is most instructive and illustrative of the status this deity had commonly attained then that the lintel of the temple, which throughout later times from about the 12th century A.D., has been called 'Ganesapatti', 'plane of Ganesa', and on which only the image of the deity Ganesa has to be carved or painted, has on it a most beautiful bust of Siva with fine neck ornaments and finer hair arrangement leaving the hair flowing short over the back shoulders. At Badami in Bijapur district in one of the caves, which as a group is ascribed to 578 A.D., in Cave I, there is a standing image of Ganesa at the left of the Nataraja shrine.[23]

In about the middle of the 7th century A.D. inscriptional and literary evidences testify to the currency of Ganesa as an important deity, deserving to be invoked at the beginning of some undertakings at least, if not at every one as in later times, and as the deity in whose power lies either success or failure in a man's pursuit of knowledge or learning, a role which in popular usage has been ascribed to the deity decidedly from the 13th century onwards.

The author Bana, a protege of the emperor Harshavardhana of Kanauja, begins the fourth chapter of his work *Harshacharita* with a panegyric of his patron as the outstanding person among the large concourse of kings like the great single tooth of Ganadhipa in his spaciously large mouth. In

the 3rd and the 8th chapters of the same work Bana refers to Vinayaka's association with Siva evidently making him auspicious. In the third chapter in para 19 he has compared the long cane in the hands of the ascetic with a goad-spear which controls the Vinayakas that either obstruct or facilitate the acquisition of all learning. With all this and even the use of the term Mahavinayaka, which is usually found in the later esoteric literature, occurring in his other work *Kadambari*,[24] there is no mention of the esoteric sectarian school of Ganapatyas in the enumeration of sectarian schools of religious persuasion and practice made in paragraph three of the 8th chapter of *Harshacharita*. Small wonder then that in the enumeration of religious sects made by Varahamihira about a century earlier, there is no reference to Ganapatyas.[25] Though no temple specially consecrated to Ganesa or Ganapati is known in Northern India till a very late time, except those mentioned in mythology of the *Vayupurana*, or of the late accounts like *Kasi Khanda*, later than 1000 A.D., the earliest inscriptional reference to the deity portrays him as almost one of the Supreme Gods. A copper-plate inscription of a king of Kamapura, Assam, who was a contemporay of emperor Harshavardhana of Kanauj, extolling the greatness of one of the ancestors of the king, whose name was Ganapati, has this: "He was incessantly raining gifts as the God Ganapati sheds ichor, and was endowned with innumerable qualities for the extermination of strife as the god Ganapati is born to destroy the Kali age, which is an age of strife."[26] The role ascribed to the god Ganesa in this inscriptional reference is assigned to him in no mythology, known to me nor even in the current beliefs about him. Even the glorification of this deity so systematically and effectively made by the philosophical saint-poets, Jnanesvara in the 13th century and Ekanatha in the sixteenth in Maharashtra, does not soar so high as to make him the rival of the Kalki incarnation of Vishnu, the end of the Kali age being the specific and appointed task of that incarnation!

We may see in this role-fitting designed in Assam for the elephant-headed Ganesa the strivings of the Hindu intelligentsia and the ethnic votaries whose patron deity he was to provide him with a significant function which would faci-

litate his enthronement in the company of the Great Gods. The history of this romantic endeavour and its outcome will have to be deferred and the story of the long eminence and subsequent fall of the brother-deity Skanda must be briefly narrated here.

The exit of Skanda from Northern India after a glorious career as a significant and martial deity over the long period of a thousand years and more, from about 500 B.C. to about 600 A.D., almost synchonizes in time with the enthronement of his so-called younger brother in that region. The so-called younger brother was thus a rival since his debut and proved a successful usurper. In this connection the traditional beliefs preserved in the incident of competition between the two brothers for a bride and the winning of her by Ganesa through a trick and in the general obsevance of the boycott of the moon on the night of the fourth day of the bright half of the lunar month of Bhadrapada, the day sacred to Ganesa and reserved for his special annual worship, are worth noting. In both Ganesa's rivalry with Skanda is evident. In the latter case, which is more important as it is narrated in the special sectarian Purana, the *Ganesapurana,* the moon jeered at Ganesa, a certain fruit having been given by his parents to Skanda in preference to him.

In the Mahayana Buddhist work *Manjusri Mulakalpa*,[37] Sanmukha or Kumara, otherwise named Mahakrodha and described as 'remover of obstacles' or 'Destroyer of Vighna', is represented as the mortal enemy of Vinayakas that cause bad dreams, a malefic function attributed to them even in the *Yajnavalkyasmriti.*

The earliest invocation made to Ganesa by any Samskrit author of note, and be it remembered that Bana's references are not of the nature of an invocation, is that by Bhavabhuti in his drama *Malatimadhava.*[28] Its content and the manner of expressing it by a great poet like Bhavabhuti lead one to conclude that the godhood of Vinayaka was recent and not very exalted. Further that the discomfiture, the blowing and swaying of his trunk resulting from which is to remove the reader's difficulties and free him for carefree life, should come through the natural activity of the special mount of Skanda rouses a suspicion that some kind of opposition and not only con-

trariness was felt to be present between the two brothers. Bhavabhuti conjures up the dance music set up for Siva's 'tandava'-dance and the consequent prancing in of Skanda's peacock, which is also fond of dance music, as sending the serpent of Siva—Why not of Ganesa? Was he not endowed with one by mythology till then?—seeking for shelter into Ganesa's trunk opening. This causes consternation and reflex blowing and swaying of the trunk. In effect Ganesa's discomfort and discomfiture which, by the very nature of the case, all the factors being present in the daily and routine life of Siva family, must have been a daily occurrence, are due to his elder brother Skanda !

The invocation of Ganapati, however, has been taken by at least some old commentators of Bhavabhuti's more celebrated drama *Uttararamacharita,* while commenting on the invocation of the work, to indicate that he was a Ganapati-devotee. So at least the commentator Viraraghava tells us in rejecting their explanation of that invocatory verse designed to show a reference to Ganesa in it. Whether Bhavabhuti came from a family which owned religious allegiance to the Ganapatya sect or not, certain it is that Ganapati must have been Bhavabhuti's patron deity, 'ishatadevata' in ordinary parlance. For his invocation of the deity is not only, as already mentioned, the earliest among any by well-known authors but appears to be the earliest of all invocations to Ganapati. Second, it should be borne in mind that the largest number, almost all, of the inscriptional invocations of this deity during the next three hundred years or so come from the region, contiguous to the north, north-west and the east of the town in Nagpur region which was Bhavabhuti's birthplace. Third, the highest glorification of and philosophizing about Ganesa identifying Him with the Supreme Soul and ascribing to him complete mastery over all learning and making him the arbiter of profound philosophy was made about 1290 A.D. by the Maharashtrian saint-poet-philosopher Jnanesvara who belonged to the city of Paithan on the Godavari, some distance south-east of Bhavabhuti's own birthplace and falling more or less within the same region.

With this background of the growth of Ganapati's deification in mind, I am inclined to attach very much more sig-

nificance not only to the inference from his direct invocation of the deity already stated, but also to the supposed facts in His life and that of His so-called brother Skanda which are only incidentally referred to by Bhavabhuti in his *Mahaviracharita,*[29] a play dealing with the early part of Rama's life.

Bhavabhuti mentions some incidents, which are not traced in the known mythological literature, about Skanda-Visakha and Ganesa whom he refers by his later appellation of Heramba in connection with Parasurama. They represent Heramba Ganapati in favourable and Skanda in very unfavourable light. One of the epithets of Skanda is 'Kraunchabhid'; for he pierced or cut up the mountain Krauncha which lies south of Kailasa, an exploit mentioned in the epic *Mahabharata.*[30] It is stated that Skanda was nurtured by his mothers in a golden lake beyond the mountain Krauncha which was protected by seven-headed dragons. Skanda shot at the mountain which fled but returned and was pierced. The *Ramayana* does not expressly mention the hole in the Krauncha mountain as the work of Skanda but the commentator and Hopkins both construe the reference that way.[31] Bhavabhuti specifically attributes the 'hole' to Parasurama and states that since that time the swans from the lake Manasa in Kailasa descended to the earth. Kalidasa[32] the very much earlier poet, too, naming this feature of the mountain 'hamsadvara', 'swan-gate,' speaks of it as Parasurama's fame-making exploit. Yet the ascription of this exploit to Parasurama, though lexicons give him the appellation of 'Kraunchabhid' as to Skanda, is not traced in the known mythological literature.

The most important achievement of Skanda, viz. the destruction of the demon Taraka is almost belittled or wiped out by the calculated description of Parasurama as the vanquisher of the destroyer of Taraka. Viraraghava, the commentator, has to content himself by affirming in a general way, without being able to quote or refer to a specific authority, that once upon a while a contest had taken place between Skanda and Parasurama and that in the fight Skanda was vanquished. Further it is asserted by Bhavabhuti that Siva got so pleased with his disciple Parasurama by his exploit that he presented him on the occasion with the axe, 'parasu', with which he is eternally associated in his name and which made him the

invincible warrior that he proved to be in spite of his being born a Brahmin.

Whether in the same fight or some subsequent one—be it noted that mythological literature does not vouchsafe any contest between Skanda and Parasurama—Bhavabhuti informs us that Parasurama had to encounter not only Skanda but also Ganesa who is said to have fought with his broken tooth as his weapon and inflicted such heavy and cutting strokes that Parasumama's chest bore their marks. Mythological literature, in this case *Bhahmavaivartapurana* as referred to by Chitrav,[33] states that Ganesa lost one of his two teeth in his fight with Parasurama and whitewashes Ganesa's discomfiture with the observation that Ganesa suffered it to honour His father's weapon, the axe, which was given to Parasurama and which Parasurama had used in the fight against Ganesa. Bhavabhuti thus tries to turn the inferiority of his patron deity vis-a-vis Parasurama and remotely but more pronouncedly in comparison with Skanda into some kind of not only explicit equality with both but also suggested superiority over Skanda.

Skanda is deprived of his special glory, he is placed almost lower than Ganesa in his performance against Parasurama, and Ganesa is upgraded through Parasurama's acknowledgment of the cutting and heavy stokes received from Ganesa's weapon of his tooth. Further through the implication of Ganesa having only one tooth at the time of his encounter with Parasurama, Bhavabhuti has cleverly and neatly covered the discomfiture of his patron deity. It is evident that an impartial and non-sectarian appraisal of the available evidence leads to the conclusion that Ganapati was being raised to Supreme Godhood in the region of Nagpur about the end of the 7th century A.D. The fact that there is no known temple of antiquity, mediaeval or early north of Chedi country or rather Jabalpur, and leaving out the later Puranic references to those supposed to exist in Varanasi (Kasi), consecrated to Ganapati as the Deity by Himself is eloquent testimony to the soundness of the conclusion stated above.

Skanda may be said to have made his exit from North India about the 7th or the 8th century of the Christian era. For then he ceased to be an independent deity of the Hindu

pantheon in his own right. He became a member of the Saiva pentad. And as such he received worship in a subordinate shrine along with other three deities who also have similar shrines. Among these latter figure both Ganesa and Parvati and sometimes even Hanuman, the monkey-god, and Goraksha, the ascetic-man-god. In Orissa, Skanda continued to receive a place in the Siva temples till the 16th century A.D. No standing temple dedicated to Skanda is known today in North India. Only in Bengal he seems to receive some attention of which I shall speak in the next chapter.[34]

The career of Skanda upto the period of his eclipse in Northern India is, however, the most glorious of all the Divine careers upto that time. Of the long period from about the 5th or the 6th century B.C. to about the 7th or the 8th century A.D., i.e. of the thousand years of Divine honours, except for a brief interval at the beginning when he figured only in his mythological role of a general of the army, Skanda was the patron deity of warrior ethnic groups and of resurgent Hindu dynasties of kings from the regions of the eastern Punjab to that of Bhuvanesvar in Orissa and of Kanchi in Tamilnad. A number of the great Gupta emperors were named after him and he appeared on the gold coins of at least one of them.[35]

Skanda received his first invocation in an inscription about the same time as Vasudeva and well before his own father Siva and about ten centuries before his now more illustrious brother Ganesa. V. V. Mirashi[36] is of the opinion that the invocation of the Nanaghat (Maharashtra State) inscription is made to Skanda who is referred to as Kumaravara.

The greatest glory of Skanda, however, that in the eastern part of the region between the birth-places or work-places of Panini and Patanjali, who as stated above vouchsafe for his current worship in their days, in Rohatak, is that he seems to have held supreme sway from about the 1st century B.C. to about the 5th century A.D.[37] This is the land where dwelt the war-like ethnic group of the Yaudheyas very significantly called so, for they fought almost all the foreign invaders, beginning with the Sakas and ending with the Hunas. The *Mahabharata* informs us that it was the land of the people who were known as Mattamayuras, 'intoxicated peacocks.' The warlike Yaudheyas with the mount of their patron deity,

peacock, perhaps proudly flaunting on their banners could very properly be called Mattamayuras !

The North Indian Divine throne vacated by Skanda did not pass on to Ganapati. It is clear from the great temples of the later centuries till about the 13th or the 14th century that partially and in part Siva occupied it and thus continued his sway uninterrupted. In parts and partially again, particularly in the western region of North India Jainism took root and Krishnaism lingered on till it gathered great strength as a result of the activities of Chaitanya, Mirabai and Vallabhacharya. In the eastern portion though Saivism prevailed, under the great Guptas who were 'Parama Bhagavatas', 'great Vaishnavas', shrines to Vishnu were erected and worship of Vishnu gathered strength. Even before the rise of Ramananda and the great Tulasidasa, Ramaism must have progressed. For in on school of Saivism even before the 14th century A.D. not only Rama was considered almost as important a deity as Siva but also was his devoted attendant Hanuman installed as a deity in a subsidiary shrine of the Saiva temple complex.[38]

Skanda who had early in his Divine career made his mark in India south of the Narmada, after his eclipse, came up with Ganesa's rivalry for the highest honour, the competition having begun already in the latter half of the sixth century A.D. In one of the caves at Badami in Bijapur, which are dated 578 A.D., both he and Ganesa are sculptured, Skanda on one of the walls of the Nataraja shrine and Ganesa as standing by the side of Nataraja.[39] And these are their earliest representations in South India.

6

SKANDA AND GANESA :

A CONTRAST IN REGIONAL ACCEPTANCE AND ADAPTATION

Invocations to Skanda were rare and no wonder that they ceased to be in evidence soon after the downfall of the Guptas. Ganesa did not have the honour of a separate invocation till he seems to have had an independent shrine in his honour. Though the first independent shrine consecrated to Ganapati is datable to about the end of the seventh century in South India at Tiruchirapalli (Trichinopoly), yet the earliest invocation to Him hails from the far north and the central middle. The former occurs in an inscription from Baijnath in Kangra and is dated not later than 750 A.D. and the latter forms the second and hence subsidiary valedictory verse of the drama *Malatimadhava* written by Bhavabhuti who was a citizen of Nagpur region. Bhavabhuti's main work is ascribed to about 725 A.D.

Both the invocations bear distinct marks of the Godhood of Ganapati being of recent recognition and still show him in somewhat non-complimentary position and situation. The invocation in the Baijnath record reads: "Om hail! Obeisance to Sarva (Siva)! May the elephant-faced (Gajasya) god grant your wishes and 'the foe of Taraka', Skanda, remove sickness. May Nandi (Siva's bull) gladden you. . . . May Virabhadra, too, give you happiness. May all the proud servants of Samkara procure your welfare."

Bhavabhuti invokes God Vinayaka's favours rather incidentally: "May the shakings of the face of Vinayaka full of hissing sound, which make the quarters resound with the hummings of myriads of bees in flight away from Vinayaka's temples, and which are caused by the entrance of the contracted body of Siva's lord of serpents, who was frightened by

the prancing peacock of Skanda running up to Siva's vicinity, drawn there by the resounding beats of drums played upon by Siva's Nandi at the evening dance of Siva, into Vinayaka's nose-aperture, protect you for long!" The playful and even light-hearted reference to Vinayaka's discomfiture reveals His limited acceptance. It is further to be noted that He is invoked as in attendance on Siva and not in a separate and independant situation. Later in the IX Act of the play (v.3ff.) Bhavabhuti again brings in Ganapati in his strictly sectarian appellation of Heramba. And the reference to the deep and sonorous sound made by Him as the standard of comparison for the loud and reverberating sound made by the local river of the region round Bhavabhuti's town of Padmavati clearly implies Bhavabhuti's knowledge of the esoteric image of Heramba which has always been made with five elephantine faces. It is not the ordinary sound made by one elephantine mouth and nostrils, as that can barely describe the gurgling sound of a rushing river through hollows of hills. In this reference, too, it is to be noted that Bhavabhuti informs us that there was in the vicinity a spontaneously established shrine of Siva, the Lord of Bhavani.

Here I have to deviate from the chronological sequence of ideas and beliefs manifested in the references to Ganesa in the interests of better understanding of the divinity-making process in operation and of the momentum seen in the romantic rise of Ganapati to Supreme Godhood. Two commentators of this drama of Bhavabhuti, have made interesting comments. Jagaddhara who must have lived in the early years of the 14th century[2] simply quotes a lexicon without mentioning its name which explains the term Vinayaka in the three alternative epithets of 'Vighnaraja', 'lord of obstacles', 'Dvaimatura' 'two-mothered one' and 'Ganadhipa' Lord of Ganas.' The other commentator, Purnasarasvati, who lived in the 15th century A.D.[3] remarks: "Vinayaka is Ganapati, so called because He puts down obstacles." Ganapati's Vinayakahood or Vighnarajahood is transformed into obstacle-removing capability pure and simple. It was thought better in the developed religious consciousness of later times to regard the God as the remover of obstacles and not to persist in harping on his original nature as the Creator of obstacles.

An inscription of the year 822 A.D. found at Sakrai in Jaipur district[4] begins with an invocation of the blessings of the three divinities, Ganesa, Chandika and Kubera. The association of Ganapati with Chandika places him properly before his rise to supreme position. It will be clear as we proceed that Ganapati was more often than not, placed with the seven or eight 'mothers' in the sculptural representations from about the 8th or the 9th century A.D. onwards. Ganapati's association with Kubera, too, is significant in view of A. K. Coomaraswamy's[5] affiliation of him with Yaksha-type of Hindu divinities.

Absence of an invocation of Ganapati at the beginning of the work of the early comentator, Medhatithi, who lived in the 9th century A.D., must be carefully noted particularly in view of the fact that five later commentators of *Manusamhita,* on which Medhatithi's comment is the earliest and the most authoritative, have one for Ganapati. Medhatithi begins with a bow to Sri Krishna and also to Brahman. Sarvajnanarayana, the oldest of the five, begins with "Om, bow to Srimahaganapati," and Ramachandra, later than the 14th century A.D., has, "Om, bow to Sri Siddhiganesa". The remaining three, Kulluka, Raghavananda and Nandana have the simple invocation of "Bow to Sri Ganesa" with or without the addition of obeisance to another deity. Of these Raghavananda with his salutation to not only Brahman but also to Guru or preceptor breathes the perfectly recent atmosphere of invocatory practice.

A pillar bearing an inscription dated 861 A.D. at Ghatiyala near Jodhpur has as its capital four images of Ganapati facing the four quarters. The inscription states that the monument was put up to invoke the grace of Ganapati for the success of the business enterprises of the local traders. It was thus a monument erected by a group and not an individual. The group consisted of 'Banias' or traders and the blessing asked for was success, "siddhi," in business.[6]

Abhinavagupta, the great Saiva exponent and commentator of Bharata's *Natyasastra,* in the 10th century A.D., begins his commentary with two invocatory verses both of which are addressed to Siva. The second refers to Siva's special role as the expounder of Bharatasutra. Ganapati is conspi-

cuous by his absence.

Sthiradeva commenting on the *Meghaduta* of Kalidasa in the 10th century begins with an invocation to the impersonal Splendour of Speech and not to Ganesa. But the great Mallinatha writing about the middle of the 13th century invokes Siva in the Ardhanari form and then to Ganesa. An inscription from Ranod or Narod, i.e. Narvad, a decayed town between Jhansi and Guna about 45 miles due south of Narwar, which is dated 1026 A.D. devotes five verses for incovation after the short obeisance to Siva in the form "Om, adoration to Siva." The first one is an invocation of Vinayaka which in expression and ideas is strangely reminiscent of Bhavabhuti. It reads:[7] "May the bellowings of Vinayaka, which surpass the great thunders of the new clouds of the monsoon, dispel in totality your sins."

The next invocatory reference to Ganapati hails from Maharashtra, the region where His acceptance as Supreme God has been more pronounced and loudly and publicly celebrated year by year than in the other parts of the country and was made by Chittarajadeva, a king of the Brahmin dynasty named Shilaharas. The plates were found at Bhandup, now in Greater Bombay, which lies a few miles south-east of Thana and are dated 1026 A.D. "Om ! Victory and prosperity ! May Ganapati, the leader of the Ganas, who receives attention through worship in all affairs protect you from misfortune removing every obstacle."[8] It is quite evident from this invocation that among the elite of Maharashtra Ganapati had come to be acknowledged as the deity to be worshipped at the commencement of any undertaking in order to guarantee the safe performance of the task undertaken.

The Chalukya king Somesvaramalla who ruled about 1130 A.D., who in his work *Manasollasa* or *Abhilashitarthachintamani* has given (Vol. II, vv. 760-763) the description of a four-handed image of Vinayaka accompanied by Siddhi and Buddhi, invokes Him at the beginning of his work in these words: "We always bow down to Ganesvara who is the unfailing charm procuring the fulfilment of all desires and who with the fanning of broad ears scatters away all obstacles as if they were light like cotton."

It is to be noted that the image is to have three eyes, a

feature peculiar to Siva. That Parvati's attendant getting into the position of the head of one horde of Siva's attendants was slowly but surely pushed into the higher position of Godhood through attribution of some of Siva's special traits and features is rendered very plausible by this early ascription. Another noteworthy point in the attributes of the image of Somesvaramalla's Ganesvara is that He is to be painted in red colour of "sindura", red lead.

The Ratanpur stone inscription of the Kalachuri king Prithvideva II ascribable to 1149-50 A.D. begins with an invocation to Rudra followed by one to Ganapati as follows: "May the leader of the Ganas grant you prosperity, the surface of whose unique frontal lobes is smeared with large masses of the excellent powder vermilion and who with the violent movements of his trunk adorns the extensive expanse of the sky and who is engaged in the sport of uprooting multitudes of trees!"[9] The Mathura inscription of Vijayapala of about the same date has the simple invocatory formula current later and now as "Om ! Om, bow to Ganapati."[10] The Bheraghat stone inscription of Narasimha of about 1155 A.D. devotes the first four verses to invoking Siva, the fifth to Ganapati under the designation "Dvipasya", elephant-faced, and the sixth to Sarasvati.[11]

A Bilaspur district inscription of Jajalladeva II of about 1168 A.D.[12] follows up an invocation to Siva with the following to Ganapati: "May the large, extremely terrific and yet lovely trunk of Ganapati for ever protect you, the trunk, which at daybreak appears splendid as it is raised after a dip in the waters of the celestial river and possesses the grace of the stalk of the large lotus, in the form of the universe."

The Rewa record of Jayasimha dated 1175 A.D., one century before Jnanesvara of Maharashtra completed his great work *Jnanesvari,* which, as will be shown below, is the charter of Ganapati as the Supreme God, at least in Maharashtra, the region of Ganapati's greatest glory and widest acceptance, still harps on the queer and obstructive origin of the deity. It reads: "Success ! Hail ! Joyless and joyful, handsome and deformed, unimpeded and obstructing is Heramba, the lord of Ganas."[13]

The state of Ganapati's status in the Divine hierarchy and

the exact nature of His acceptance upto the end of the 12th century A.D. is best indicated by the attention or the relative lack of it shown by the first Maharashtrian saint-poet-philosopher Mukundaraja. This author of a philosophic treatise named *Vivekasindhu*, "River of Correct thought", is believed to have died about 1198 A.D. He drew upon the *Upanishads* directly and not through the mediacy of the *Bhagavadgita*. He was a sectarian Saiva. In the critical edition of the book prepared by K. P. Kulkarni, at the beginning of the work we have two simple and short obeisances, "Bow to Sri Ganesa; bow to Ramachandra." The individual meant in the second obeisance is not Rama, the Raghava who was an incarnation of Vishnu, but the spiritual preceptor of the poet-philosopher Mukundaraja. However, the first verse of the work proclaiming the purpose of the exposition expressly states that the author does so after saluting "Hara (Siva), who is the support of the whole world, whose eyes are like lotuses and who is immutable." Further nine verses are devoted to expanding this last salutation by praising Siva and identifying him with Brahman and by stating that it was He who, being pleased with the author, made the work charming and appealing.

In the Dhureti plates of Trailokyamalla of about 1212 A.D. the first bow is made to Siva and is preceded by 'Om.' After a bow to Ganapati, then, victory for Devakinandana Krishna alias Mukunda is proclaimed and Nilakantha (Siva) is called upon to protect all.[14] An inscription in the ruined temple of Bhavani at Patan near Chalisgav in Khandesa, which is ascribed to the first quarter of the 13th century in the reign of the Yadav king Singhana, begins with the invocation, "Om, bow to Ganadhipati !" However a copper-plate grant of Krishna of the same dynasty dated 1249-50 A.D. begins as in the case of Dhureti plates of the Kalachuri king, with "Om, bow to Siva" and follows up with a "bow to Sri Ganadhipati," and invokes the protection of Varaha, Vishnu in his boar-incarnation.[15] The Cintra inscription of the reign of the Chalukya king Sarangadeva dated in the last quarter of the 13th century begins with two verses invoking Siva and the third Ganapati referring to Him not by his proper name but only as 'eka-dasana,' 'one-toothed one,' 'deva,' 'god,' 'kapardi,'

'matted one' and 'the son of the foe of Cupid,' i.e. as the son of Siva.[16]

Mallinatha, a South Indian, famous as the most lucid commentator and as the one who specialised in the classical semi-epics of Kalidasa, is believed to have lived in the 13th century about the same time perhaps as the king mentioned above. He devotes three verses to his invocation. The first records a bow to Siva in the Ardhanari-form. The second invoking Ganesa reads thus: "Let us contemplate on the greatness of the pot-bellied god, who has human body but elephantine face, who is quiet and purifying and whose glory is unimaginable, so that He may dispel darkness in the form of obstacles." The third verse addressed to "Vani", "Logos" and that too in the first person singular and not plural, makes it quite clear that the inspiration for writing was her special preserve and can be had only by her favour.

And now before we turn to Jnanesvara's glorious charter to Ganapati as the Supreme God, and Ganapati's enthronement in Maharashtra and its further development culminating in the current group-festival over-shadowing all other festive or fast occasions, we must have a glimpse of Ganesa-Vinayaka's progress in Southern India.

Longhurst writing on the architecture of the Pallavas of Kanchi, who were famous for three or four centuries beginning with the 6th, states that prior to the Rajasimha period, representations of Ganesa and Karttikeya or Skanda are rare in the iconography. In the Rajasimha period, 674-800 A.D., both deities are represented. It is to be noted that Skanda occurs occasionally and that too in the Somaskanda image as a child seated between his parents. But Ganesa occurs independently and also frequently. In the earlier period they occur rarely and that only in subordinate places. From the Rajasimha period their importance begins to grow. Not only do they tend to be in prominent places of architectural ornamentation of the temples but also are often established in separate shrines until as Longhurst writes: "the worship of Ganesa and Skanda develops into two separate cults with temples of their own."[17]

As at Badami in Bijapur district so further south in the Pallava dominions the earliest representations of Ganapati

though in ornamental positions are met with in the 3rd or the 4th quarter of the 6th century so much so that Longhurst thinks that "upto the end of the Mamalla period about 674 A.D. Ganesa was regarded as a minor deity of no particular significance."[18] The 7th and the 8th century Maharashtra religious centres, the Gharapuri caves in the Bombay harbour, the Kailasa temple and the Dasavatara cave and the Ravanki Khai excavation at Verula (Ellora) contain the representation of Ganapati in the group of the "Sapta matrika", the seven mothers. In addition at two of these places there is a gigantic image of the deity.[19]

Ganapati's sculptural representation in the company of the 'mothers' appears to have become a common feature of the Saiva temples of the 7th or the 8th century even in Northern India. At Mandor near Jodhpur one of the two rock-relievos discovered was that of Ganesa and the eight divine mothers.[20]

The colossal images of Ganesa at Gharapuri and at Verula highlight another feature of the Ganapati romance. Though it is, to judge by the available references, not so common, yet it is one which I consider to be highly significant for our understanding of the rise of Ganesa. Getty has noted an image at Unakoti in Tripura which is 30 feet high and two at Hampi—let it be borne in mind that the place is not very far from Sravana Belgola which is famous for its huge Jaina statue of Gomatesvara—one 20 feet and the other 30 feet high. Further south at Chidambaram to the south-west of the great temple of Nataraja, there is the shrine of "a huge Ganesa" whose dimensions are not given. Similar is the case with the huge Vinayaka image of the late 17th century shrine in the lake-attached to the great Meenakshi temple of Madura. At Barsur about 55 miles west of Jagadalpur in Bastar, among the many Hemadapanti, i.e. dry stone masonry temples named after Hemadapant, whose activity must be dated after the 13th century A.D., there is one of Ganesa. In front of it there is a figure of Ganesa which is huge in circumference and not in height, the former dimension measuring 17 feet and the latter only 7 or 8. This variation in the stressing of a particular dimension is in keeping with the emphasis that is laid today, and was so laid also by Mallinatha, on the expanse of Gana-

pati's belly. At Diapur Dalmi in Manbhum district of West Bengal "the most notable of the extant statues is a colossal Ganesa, who acording to Col. Dalton was the janitor, the heaps of stones round about representing the remains of the river gate of the city."[21]

In Gujarat, Deccan and the Karnatak by the 11th century A.D. over the doors of the Saiva temples Ganapati had come to occupy the central place. That Vaishnav temples had either the goddess Sri or Gajalaxmi or Garuda and sometimes Vishnu or Garuda shows that Ganapati's position had come to be regarded as supreme only among the minor Saiva deities.

A feature significant in the complex genesis of the god-hood of Ganapati is the fact that whereas Siva temples face east or west, and both those of Goddesses and of Vishnu in any form face east, west or even north, those of Ganesa appear to be the only Hindu temples to face even the southern direction. In this aspect Ganapati temples resemble Jaina shrines.[22]

We have seen before, though incidentally, that the author of *Abhilashitarthachintamani* in the 12th century prescribed the image of Ganapati. His is neither the oldest nor the latest delineation of the image; nor is it the only standard one. G. H. Khare[23] has brought together all the prescriptions, excepting that of the most pronouncedly sectarian section in *Saradatilaka,* which number 13 in all. And yet to judge by the South Indian images in the old temples, even they do not exhaust all the variations. Of the thirteen, in the case of seven the number of eyes is not specified, in one it is presented to be either two or three and in the remaining five Ganapati is three-eyed. As far as it is prudent to make a sweeping generalisation in such cases there is hardly any image of Ganapati in any standing temple which has three eyes. This fact is not intriguing but illuminating. It corroborates the contention that sectarians in their efforts to raise their deity into the august group of the pantheon tried to heap on him some of the special attributes of Siva, who, on the other hand, from his being the Lord of his hordes could be easily given the appellation of Ganesa.

In only one prescription Ganapati is provided with two consorts named "Riddhi" and "Buddhi". In Maharashtra in the popular view Ganapati's consorts are "Riddhi" and "Siddhi".

This is also the current view in the Uttar Pradesh, and Sampurnanand states that the correct textual opinion on the subject names "Siddhi" and "Buddhi" as the sonsorts.[24]

Among the thirteen prescriptions detailed by Khare in only three Ganapati's consorts are enjoined. And they are: "Riddhi, Buddhi", "Siddhi, Buddhi" and "Sarasvati, Sri". The earliest and perhaps also the most famous of the Vinayaka temples of South India is the one at Tiruvalanjuli on the Kaveri about 6 miles away from Kumbhakonam in Tanjore district. It is older than the beginning of the 11th century. The tradition about the Vinayaka of this place who is called "Sveta Vinayaka", "white-coloured Vinayaka," is that it was after they worshipped him that the gods could successfully churn the ocean. Indra is believed to visit the place in gratitude, once a year on the fourth of the bright half of the lunar month of Bhadrapada, to worship him. This is the standard Ganesa-festival day and it is observed with great eclat in the town. The fine metal image of Ganapati in this shrine has two metal figure consorts too. They are known there as "Veni" and "Kamali" according to Jagadisa Ayyar[25] but as "Riddhi" and "Siddhi" according to Srinivasan.[26] Further, Ayyar informs us that Vishnu, too, is supposed to worship this Vinayaka on the 6th of the bright half of the lunar month of Margasirsha. At Tiruppurambiyam also near Kumbhakonam on the bank of the tank of the temple of Siva in the Dakshinamurti-form there is an image of Vinayaka made of white marble. This Vinayaka is known as "Pralayankartha", "deluge-bringer", because strange to say, he is supposed to have saved the world from a deluge. This goes well with Ganapati-Vighnakarta being called Ganapati-Vighnaharta.

The sectarians and devotees of Ganapati in their uplifting efforts were intent on adding to his prestige by making him the "Lord of Buddhi" i.e. intelligence and thus were paving the way to Ganapati's being looked upon as the inspirer and controller of all intellectual and literary undertakings. This evidently they were trying to do at a time when with the long eclipse of Brahma and the disuse of his active worship that field of function was not completely occupied by Sarasvati, who according to one account was Brahma's wife and acording to another his daughter. Development of the concept

of Goddess Sarasvati will be briefly dealt with later in connection with the Devi-component of the pantheonic pentad. Here it will suffice to mention that though at one place in the *Mahabharata* Sarasvati is said to have been worshipped by Narada and though she is the Goddess who is saluted, after Narayana and Nara, in the opening announcement of the current text of that epic, as Hopkins[27] states Sarasvati in the epic is still in a fluid condition, her riverine origin having been not forgotten.

I may emphasize also the fact that Siva himself was put up in the epic as a controller and dispenser of learning and arts. In the later portions of the epic "he inspired sundry authors, "makers of books and Sutras"; even Savarni was made a "granthakrit," "maker of books". In one place Siva is spoken of as the author of all literature and in another he figures as a teacher. I have already mentioned the eloquent image of Siva in the preceptor-pose enshrined in a famous temple in South India. Further both "Vidya", "learning" and "Savitri", "sacred literature" follow Parvati in her train and are thus attendants of Siva.[28]

Ganapati-followers thus found it feasible to attempt the ascription of lordship over learning and writing to their pet deity who was in some respects being raised through the appropriation of some of Siva's attributes.

Of the thirteen prescriptions only six specify the colour of the image. Three of them lay down golden or wheaten, two red or red-lead and one blue. In current practice though body-coloured, white or even golden images are preponderant yet the prayer verses chanted at the end of annual worship of the deity speak only of red lead as the colour of the face and also of the body! In the injunctions of the deeply sectarian text *Saradatilaka* quoted by Sampurnanand[29] only a red-lead-coloured image is contemplated. The deity is almost universally conceived as four-handed, all the six prescriptions out of the thirteen that specify the number of arms laying down four. Nine of the described icons are said to carry sweets in one of the hands. Four images are specifically described as having the elephantine-trunk, while in most others the broken tooth with or without "elephantine" attached to it is said to be held in one of the hands. No prescription depicts

Ganapati as human in form. And yet in one of the most famous Vinayaka shrines of South India, the one at Tiruchengattangudi near Nannilam in Tanjore District, the deity set up has a human form. And the anthropomorphic deity is said to have killled the demon Gajasura or Gajamukhasura nearby. The exploit, which even the partisan *Puranas* did not dare to transfer to this deity from his putative father Siva, is in this local tradition imputed to Ganapati-Vinayaka in order to boost him into Supreme godhood !

Another source of glorification, very natural and even more necessary, is the great service that Vinayaka is represented to have rendered to Rama in the local tradition. Rama is believed to have worshipped Siva at Ramesvara before he could cross the ocean to Ceylon. After his holocaust of the Rakshasas including Ravana, Rama was in dire need of protection from ghosts of the Rakshasas. And the Vinayaka of Vedaranyam or Kodikkarai, otherwise significantly known as "Adi Setu", "primeval bridge" in Tanjore district is said to have given it. The Vinayaka standing at the west entrance of the Vedaranyesvara temple built before 1182 A.D. is named "Virahatte-Vinayaka" because it was he who got rid of the ghosts of Rakshasas that were haunting Rama. Naturally the deity is highly regarded by the people as a very powerful exorciser.[30] The famous temple of Uchchipillaiyar on the rock at Tiruchirapally (Trichinopoly) which appears to have existed from before the middle of the 11th century A.D. and that of the five-faced Heramba Ganapati riding on a lion in the Nilayathakshi temple at Negapatam[31] in Tanjore district bear testimony to the early existence, spread and activity of the esoteric sect of the Ganapatyas or devotees of Ganapati in esoteric groups. "Pillaiyar" is the Tamil popular and endearing term for Ganapati and 'Uchchi" stands for the Samskrit word "Uchchishta" meaning "polluted." This appellation is generally reserved for the image of the deity Ganapati in embrace or in the company of his Sakti or one or the other of his consorts. Heamba Ganapati is a concept, again, much patronized in the esoteric circles and glorifies the deity through depiction of powerful and terrorizing features. The lion as mount assimilates the deity with the great Devi, Mahishasuramardini; the five-faces not only testify to the omniscience but with their

five trunks also to the power of the deity which is further demonstrated by the multiplicity of arms, ten in this case, assimilating the deity with the great Nataraja-Siva.

It can hardly be an accident that another Pillaiyar, with immense miraculous power and traditionally brought into relations with the great Nayanmar (Saiva devotee) Sundaramurthi stands on the bank of the pond outside the Sri Valmikesvara temple at Tiruvarur or Tiruvalur only 15 miles away from Negapatam. The Vinayaka is called "Mathuraitha Pillaiyar" because he tested and delivered the gold belonging to Sundaramurthi which the latter had left at Vriddhachalam asking the deity of the place to transfer it to his village Tiruvarur. Vinayaka of the latter place obliged the saint, demonstrating his own power and consequently eshancing his own prestige.[32]

Now we may turn to Skanda and his career in India south of the Narmada. As we saw above, in the Pallava period, the early part of it at least, Skanda figures in the Somaskanda form of Siva images. And as stated in the earlier chapter that form of Siva is the most current and popular one for all festive occasions in Tamilnad. Before trying to describe the recent and present position of practices connected with Skanda worship it is necessary to state briefly the extent of attention, if any, that Skanda received by himself and in his own right.

On the very threshold of the region of the South, at Verula in Maharashtra (Marathwada) the Ramesvara cave temple shows us a full-fledged i.e. six-faced image of Subrahmanya or Skanda. It is noteworthy that the particular form is which he is sculptured there is what is known, a little later, in Tamilnad as the Desika Subrahmanya form; i.e. the form in which Skanda figures as the preceptor of his father Siva, initiating the latter into the mysteries and profundity of the sacred five-letter formula.[33]

This representation of Skanda and that too soon after his eclipse as a martial deity in North India, i.e. about the 8th century A.D. must set political and socio-cultural historians of India to thinking about the phase which the Indian society was entering into. It was in keeping with the quietistic atmosphere of the era thickened by the access of irrational, ecstatic and even orgiastic nature of Tantric religious beliefs and practices that this deity, who was the paragon of generals

and the martial god *par excellence* for about a thousand years, did not receive a single representation in his Tarakari, foe of the demon Taraka, form, in the many shrines in Tamilnad dedicated to him from about the 10th century onwards.

The only evidence of his former marital glory that South India has preserved is the javelin-bearing image of Skanda standing as "infant" Subrahmanya in the famous temple on the Palni hills. In the inscription of the grant possessed by the temple he is further specified as "Velayudhaswami", "the lord who wields the javelin", and is credited with having been the preceptor of the sage Agastya, who is the Aryan explorer of the south and also its Aryanizer. The special form of worship, the "kavadi", which though it is one of the vowed forms of Hindu worship of the Great Gods, is considered to be a speciality pleasing to Skanda. It is said to have originated in an incident pertaining to this temple. "Kavadi" is the contraption like a two-panned pair of scales carried on the shoulder, the two ends of the shoulder-pole having the images of Skanda and Vinyaka carved, one on each.[34] This contraption the worshipper has to carry from his place to the temple of the deity and preferably to this Palni temple and to deposit it there. The day is specified in the Tamil almanac so that this form of worship or vow may be said to be common to all castes. Yet in actual practice the worship of Skanda and especially the "kavadi" form of it is most favoured among the large castes of Pallis and Kallans.[35]

Of the six famous temples of this deity including the above-mentioned one, that at Swamimalai hill near Kumbhakonam enshrines him in his Desika-preceptor-form. Skanda or Swaminatha as he is locally called is said to have instructed Siva, who so often figures in mythology as a preceptor, at least once, and that too the only occasion, in South India in his images, in the mysteries of the mystic formula of 'five-letters.' To commemorate this fact, it is suggested, Skanda's temple is placed at the top of the hill as the principal shrine and that of Siva a little below it though within its precincts. Skanda of this place is supposed to have specially obliged Indra against a demon, not known to standard textual mythology, in recognition of which service the animal in front of the Deity is white elephant and not peacock as usual. Skanda's

temple there has therefore become a centre of pilgrimage.

While assessing the significance of this fact for the currency and spread of Skanda's godhood one has to remember the importance of Kumbhakonam to Hindus of South India. It is the only place south of Nasik where the famous Kumbhamela, which occurs every 12 years when Jupiter passes through the constellation Leo, can occur. In the tank of the place at that time all the nine sacred rivers of India are believed to meet together and render it the holiest of waters. Owing to this sanctity of Kumbhakonam it is one of the rarest sites where we have a real "panchayatana", the Hindu pantheonic pentad housed in fair proximity though the term "panchayatana" is not applied to the configuration of temples. Out of the seventeen temples at Kumbhakonam proper twelve are Saivite, four Vaishnavite and one is dedicated to Brahma. In the main Saiva temple of Kumbhesvara there is a separate shrine for the Sun god. This is the place of the subordination of that deity to the two Supreme gods, Siva and Vishnu. He is supposed to have worshipped Siva here. Hence his shrine, though seperate, lies within the Siva temple. It was here, too, that Vishnu in the form of Chakrapani—"wheel-handed and wheel-shaped"—humbled the pride of the Sun god. One of the four Vaishnavite temples is that of Chakrapani. In one of the Siva temples are the 'Matrikas', the representations of Devi. In addition to this in the Nageswara temple there is the Saktic representation of Ganapati in the "polluted" form.

There are 18 places each one with a temple or temples, some of them famous like Pattiswaram and Darasuram, which lie within a ten-mile radius of Kumbakonam. In both the places, Pattiswaram and Darasuram there are temples of sculptural representations of Devi and at the former place one of Devi embracing the "Linga." And Swamimalai, the place of Swaminatha Skanda's temple, is one of these eighteen.[36]

As the viewpoint stated earlier about the competition between the two brother-gods started by their devotees or rather by the sectarian devotees of the younger god Ganesa gets additional support from the shrines of Ganesa and their traditions current in the localities of this great place of South Indian pilgrimage I make no apology to draw my readers' at-

tention to it. Tiruvalanjuli famous for its temple of Sveta Vinayaka with his consort figures among the 18 temple-centres within the ten-mile radius of Kumbhakonam. Skanda of Swamimalai is not provided with his consorts but to match his white elephant the Ganapati Vinayaka of Tiruvalanjuli is also made white. As if to contest the honours more effectively, on the Swamimalai hill itself there is an image of Vinayaka facing south and he is known as Kankkudutta Vinayaka or the "sight-restorer" Vinayaka, as the belief is current that at the place a blind man as a result of his extreme devotion to Vinayaka had his eye-sight restored.[37] Vinayaka the rescuer of the blind is pitted against Skanda, the teacher of his father !

The remaining four important temples of Skanda are: one at Tiruchendur in Tinnevelly district, another at Tiruppurankundram near Madura, one at Tiruttani in Chittoor district and the fourth at Algarkoil or Tirumalirumsolaimalai. At least in the first three places he is represented as a four-handed deity with his two consorts, Valli and Devayanai [Devasena] on two sides of his. There is no mythological sanction for his consorts and only one of the iconographic texts permits him to be asscciated with one or two "Saktis", "powers". In the Tiruppurankundram temple there is a sculptural representation of Skanda's marriage with Devasena, with Indra officiating as the donor. This incident can be said to be dramatization of the mythological account of Skanda's being appointed as the leader of the army of gods i.e. of "Devasena."[38]

In Maharashtra Karttikaswami, as the deity is generally known, is believed to be such a confirmed bachelor that women are forbidden to enter his temple or see his image. Only one temple that, too, as in South India on the top of a hillock, Parvati near Poona, dedicated to this god is known in Maharashtra. The deity is almost not known in Gujarat and perhaps the same is the case in other regions except Bengal. In this connection the varied recording of some kind of festival or fast in honour of Skanda in the different almanacs in the linguistic regions is both interesting and instructive. In the solar almanacs of the South, both Kerala and Tamilnad, the day known as Skandashashti, Skanda's sixth, is marked in

the month of 'Tula' or Libro. In the lunar calendar this day is the bright sixth of the lunar month of Margasirsha. In Kerala lamanac only one bright sixth, that of the lunar month of Magha is noted as "sashti vrata", "sixth-vow." It should be borne in mind that in Kerala Skanda has a powerful competitor in the person of the deity Sasta, who is believed to be the son of Siva by Vishnu in the form of the feminine manifestation as Mohini. There is also the boy-Krishna cult fairly well patronized by Keralans. Hardly is there any temple in Kerala dedicated to Skanda which is well-known. In Tamilnad, Skanda, with his famous temples and his special form of worship and his figuring as a fondled child of Siva and Parvati, has a much longer and more marked festival-fast observed in his honour. The Tamil almanac enjoins the beginning of the festival four days before the sixth and ends it on the sixth. The fulfilment of the 'kavadi" vow at the Palni temple of the god is enjoined to be carried out on a day which often coincides with the 'Holi'—fifteenth, a day on which in commemoration of Siva's destruction of Cupid an image of it is burnt and on which a procession of deities is taken out in all Saiva temples. In addition, one "6th" every month is set apart as "fast or vow" day on which special votaries of Skanda oberve a fast during the day and break it in the evening after a bath. This fast which is almost exactly a replica of a similar fast for Ganapati, is laid down in the authoritative texts and scrupulously shown in the almanacs of Maharashtra, Gujarat and even Punjab. The only feature not expressly mentioned is that the fast can be broken only after a sight of the moon.

In the almanac of Andhradesa the 6th of the bright half of Margasirsha is recorded as 'Subrahmanya Mahashashti' implying that like the fast of Sivaratri this of Subrahmanya Skanda is the most important among others in his honour. Every bright sixth would by implication have to be considered as a voluntary fast in honour of Skanda, that of the bright 6th of Margasirsha being the biggest. That this day is the most important for Skanda worship in the eyes of South Indians is but natural in view of the practices current in Tamilnad. The Karnatak almanac, which agrees more with the Maharashtrian on this point, too, notes the bright 6th of

Margasirsha as the day on which the car-festival, processional festival of Subrahmanyaswami on the Mysore-Kanara border takes place. The Andhra almanac contrary to the implication stated above does not lay down any observance in honour of Skanda on any other day.

The Karnataka almanac describes the 6th of the bright half of the lunar month Magha, i.e., the day which is exactly two lunar months later than the great day of Skanda Subrahmanya in Tamilnad and Andhradesa, as "Skanda shashti", Skanda's sixth. The Kerala almanac tallies with the Karnatak one in prescribing the Magha sixth as a fast or vow, the Karnatak one alone specifying it as in honour of Skanda.

The Gujarat, old Madhya Bharat, Rajasthan, Panjab and Varanasi almanacs record only the bright six of the lunar month of Margasirsha as Skanda's sixth. All of them excepting that of Panjab register the day alternatively as 'Champa shashti,' the Panjab one describing it as 'Lalita shashti.' It is clear that the particular sixth is considered to be a day sacred to some goddess.

Maharashtra almanac stands apart in so far as there is no day which is described as Skandashashti and this particular day is noted merely as Champashashti. The injunction given for activity is the leave-taking of Martanda Bhairava on that day. On the 1st of the lunar month Margasirsha the setting up of Martanda Bhairava for worship for six days, the festival being called "six-nights festival of Martanda Bhairava (Mallari)," is prescribed. This fast of Champashashti is observed in many families, particularly in Brahmin families. Its observance is venerably old. The saint-poet Namadev, a junior contemporary of Jnanesvara, who is believed to have died about 1350 A.D., in his description of Krishna's boyish pranks has noted the fact of its observance in the family of Nanda, the cowherd foster-father of Krishna (see *Namadeva Gatha,* para 81). He has mentioned the fact that it was in honour of Martanda, a rigorous and strict deity, and that the special devotees dedicated to him lifelong, his Vaghya and Murali, as his male and female devotees were and are known, were to be fed in observance of the vow. Six-nights-festival ending on the Skandashashti day should incline one to look upon the observance to be in reality in honour of Skanda.

This should further explain why Skandashashti is not mentioned in the Maharashtra almanac, and also lead us to identify Maharashtra's Khandoba, who is Mallari Martanda Bhairava, with Skanda of the *Puranas*.

Though no temple of his is reported from Bengal, there is ample evidence not only of the active currency of some episodes of his life but also of festive worship of Skanda in Bengal. At Bansberia near Tribeni in Hooghly on the last day of the lunar month of Kartik a fair is held in celebration of the festival which is in honour of Karttikeya. The day is marked as 'Kartik puja" day.[39] J. N. Banerjea supplies us with evidence of its being an all-Bengal festival. And what is most important is that clay images—compare the clay images of Ganapati used for His annual worship wherever it is current—of Skanda are worshipped on that day by women seeking progeny.[40] In the Bengali marriage rites it is customary for the mother of the bridegroom to eat seven times on the day of the wedding. The popular explanation of the custom is that Durga, the mother of Kartik ate with her ten hands when the latter went for his marriage owing to fear that his wife when she came home would not give Durga, her mother-in-law, adequate food.[41] So deep are the associations of Skanda's marriage, not commonly known to mythology, in the Bengali system of beliefs and practices !

Worship of and devotion to Skanda and that, as must be evident from what has been said about it so far, not for a martial not even perhaps for a healing, and certainly not for a malevolent spirit—is, outside of Bengal, prevalent in South India, more so in Tamilnad than even in Kerala. Srinivasan[42] identifies Skanda with Tamilians to such an extent that he remarks: "Every South Indian village and now every place where South Indian lives—in Ceylon, Malaya and other places—has a shrine for this deity." He tells us that though he is a very popular deity and that all classes of people visit his temple yet he is the pet deity of the artisan groups, being looked upon as the presiding deity of handicrafts. Even the smallest Siva temple in South India has a separate shrine dedicated to Subrahmanya.[43] And as already mentioned more than once he figures in the family portrait images of Somaskanda.

Skanda Subrahmanya or Velayudhan won the hearts of th extreme South which since the drawn of Indian history has gone on striking a separate chord in the chorus harmony of Indian culture ! May it be that with the matrilineal matrilocal background of the past, the region on having embraced the newer regime of the patrilineal patrilocal institutions stabilized it and guaranteed its future through the divine example of Siva, Durga or Parvati with their ever youthful playful child Skanda, playing between them !

Srinivasan,[44] whose estimate of Skanda's status as a deity and his popularity with Tamilians I have drawn upon, observes about Ganapati, whom he groups among 'minor Saivite deities' along with Skanda and 'servants of Siva': "Ganapati is an important deity in the Hindu pantheon. Supposed to be the Lord of obstacles, (Vighneswara), he is worshipped by all groups of Hindus, except perhaps the more orthodox Vaishnavites. He is invoked at the commencement of every religious ceremony—be it auspicious or otherwise[?] In Malabar-side there is a sect of brahmins called Ganapatiyas [Ganapatyas], who worship this deity exclusively in preference to others. Ganapati whom the Tamilians more endearingly call Pillaiyar or Vinayakar is a very popular deity and has a small temple in almost every place when there is habitation in South India."

About fortyfive years before Srinivasan, who is clearly a Tamil Vaishnava Brahmin, Gopinath Rao, a Keralan and a profound student of Hindu iconography observed:[45] "It is said that the shrines of Subrahmanya are rather common in South India but those of Vighnesvara are more numerous. Every village, however small, has in it an image of Vignesvara, with or without a temple to house it in. At the entrance of villages and forts, below pipal trees adjoining villages, on the right side of entrances into Siva temples, in a niche which is at the commencement of the innermost *prakara* circuit in the temples of Vishnu as well as Siva and also in separate shrines specially constructed in Siva temples in the southwest corner, the figure of Vighneswara is invariably to be seen." Further elucidation of the status of Ganapati in Tamilnad may be had from the semi-ethnographical source of the District Gazetteers. That of Tiruchirapally (Trichinopoly)[46] published in 1907

provides the following specification: . . . . "the mass of the people pay less reverence to the Brahmanical deities than to the older aboriginal gods and goddesses. Of the former, the only one whose temples are numerous is Ganapati or Pillaiyar, the elephant-headed son of Siva, a kindly god who removes abstacles from the path of those who do him fitting honour."

N. K. Bhattasali,[47] a Bengal Brahmin, states that it is in Western India that "a sect of the Hindus worship Ganesa as the Supreme Deity and is known as the Ganapatyas."

The sect of the Ganapatyas which is seen in the writtings of the above-quoted authors tossed out of their own region was already in the 14th century so ramified as to have six branches.[48] That Tamilnad having within it the biggest of Ganapati temples and that too of Ganapati in 'Uchchishta' form, which is the most favoured among the esoteric sect of the Ganapatyas, had or has no Ganapatyas is a statement that will require very much weightier proof than the assertion of a Vaishnava Brahmin even though he is a Tamilian. Similarly Bengal, the land of images of dancing Ganesa, and most of them according to Banerjea shown under overhanging mango-branches, which has at least one fairly old, pre-Muslim, temple of Genesa in Burdwan district and another 18th Century one in Santhal Parganas,[49] cannot possibly be without its quota of Ganapatyas.

Whether the esoteric sectarians are found among the people of the various States of India are not, it is acknowledged by all that Ganesa receives homage from most religious-minded Hindus at the beginning of ceremonies, religious or semi-religious occasions in some form or other and that the homage or worship offered is specifically intended or designed to safeguard the safe completion of the item.

The evil-averting capability as popularly conceived and originally ascribed to Ganapati belongs to him in the negative aspect. He was *par excellence* the maker of trouble, though only subconsciously in the minds of the elite yet almost patently so in the eyes of the people at large. In Tamilnad, where he is quite often associated with Pidari, the trouble-making village female spirit, in her shrines and in the rough lithic nondescript form also in open places under large 'pipal' and other trees, at the borders of a village and at the meetings

of four roads or lanes in towns and villages, he is still treated as the great malevolent spirit. This attitude it is that gave rise to the past practice of the well-to-do people to carve his image on the lintel of the front door of their houses. So firmly associated with this post of his is the deity that in Maharashtra the lintel of the front door of a house or of a temple is known as 'Ganesapatti', 'the plank or strip of Ganesa' i.e. whereon Ganesa's image has to be carved or painted. This feature of household architecture is almost a common trait even in such regions as Gujarat, Bihar, Uttara Pradesh and Bengal, where the annual worship of this deity is not in evidence and even the usual vow-fasting undertaken for special favour is not much resorted to. In Uttara Pradesh[50] at least and may be in some other regions as well, the image of the deity is impressed on the walls outside by the side of the front door on occasions of auspicious events like marriage to avert evil. This use of the image of the deity likens him to the magic symbol of the palm of the hand usually imprinted for protective purposes.

Vinayaka Ganapati's dual position in Tamilnad must be again mentioned and his valuation and spread among the rural folks must be stressed here. For this aspect alone would justify and that, too, only to a very limited extent, the usual saying attributed to Manu or Vriddhamanu and bandied about by H. H. Wilson, E. W. Hopkins, G. A. Grierson and even by Venkayya.[51] It runs: "Siva is the deity of Brahmins, Madhava or Vishnu is that of Kshatriyas; while Brahma is appropriated by Vaisyas, Gananayaka belongs to Sudras."

The truth about the elephant-headed god is on the other hand, quite the contrary. He represents the Brahmanizing process in excelsis. In the spread of the worship of other deities whether of the standard pentad or of the complex pantheon, sections of Hindu society other than the Brahmin have taken active part or lent a helping hand; but the raising of Ganapati to the position of being a component of the pentad is a romance enacted by Brahmins and Brahmins alone. That is precisely the reason why the Dravida Munnetara Kazhagam fixed upon the public breaking up of the images of Ganapati as the token of its being an anti-Brahmanism and anti-priesthood movement.[52]

In Maharashtra the votaries of Ganapati did not stop with that achievement but went much further, so that, as will be made clear in the next chapter, Ganapati was identified in His person with the sacred syllable 'Om', and with the Supreme Soul and indirectly raised above Siva and Vishnu, and made the arbiter of arts, learning and exposition. The authors of this exaltation in the old-world ideology were Brahmins. And it can hardly be an accident that it was a Brahmin leader of Poona who made Ganapati the centre of some part of the newer ideology, that of political agitation and group solidarity!

7

GANESA : A SECTARIAN AGGRANDISEMENT

I have mentioned a number of features in the history of the rise to Supreme Godhood of Vinayaka under the guise of Ganapati or Ganesa which suggest the cause of it to be the Brahmanizing of the deity component of the Hindu religious complex. I shall begin the story of the sectarian aggrandisement of Ganesa by analysing the factors which both made the Brahmin sectarians undertake the task and gave them marked success in their undertaking.

In the ancient system of education a child was taught to write the letters of the alphabet not straight with the first letter of it as is done in the teaching of English alphabet, but as in the case of other undertakings, particularly written records, with some invocation to some supernatural agency. The early inscriptions, after those of Asoka, generally began with the word "Siddham." It may mean "success" but its connotation in the context was deeper. "Siddhas" were supernatural or perfect beings. The concept was much more a common matter of Jainism than of Buddhism or Hinduism. And "Siddham" even by itself was an overt-covert admission of Jain spiritual help. This was the case openly and frankly when the complete formula "Om, namah Siddham," "Om, bow to Siddha" was used. In Indo-Aryan India there is reason to believe that this formula was considered so indispensable to the learning process that a child had to begin its lessons in the alphabet with learning to write this formula. The formula with two compound syllables, the first being a compound vowel and the second a conjunct consonant, and the last letter a nasal stop was very difficult to pronounce and also to write. Even older folks have found it difficult to cope with it and they can be seen struggling with it if asked to write it.

The initial struggle of childhood is writ large in the actual form which the expression received in more than one region of

Indo-Aryan languages and also in some idiomatic linguistic usages. Thus in Maharashtra, till at least the end of the 18th century, the beginning of any undertaking used to be described idiomatically as the "onama" of the thing. The expression "onama" which is a popular and lethargic version of the formal classical "Om namah siddham" through the intermediate stage of "o na ma si dham" was so much associated with the invariable beginning of the alphabet that like the English "a b c" of a thing it connoted the very beginning and the elements of anything. The Brahmin saint-poet, political agitator and organizer, whom Shivaji himself valued highly, Ramadasa uses this expression "onama" in the precise sense of the elements, in the context the teaching of the elements of the technique of spiritual salvation taught by Lord Krishna. He wrote it euphonically as "vonama", the initial vowel being turned into the liquid "v" sound.[1]

In Uttara Pradesh, according to Sampurnanand,[2] formerly the alphabet itself was known as 'siddham' and that the letters of the alphabet used to be repeated after the word 'siddham' was pronounced. At the time of Sampurnanand's writing the book, *Ganesa,* in schools following the old method of instruction, the repeating of the alphabet was preceded by the pronouncement of the expression "onamasidhanga" which according to him is a distorted rendering of the sentence "om, nama siddham", but which, as my readers will have realized, is in reality a corruption of 'om, namah siddham', 'om, bow to siddha (Jina).' Having incorrectly equated 'siddham' with alphabet, Sampurnanand proceeds to make the further wrong suggestion that identification of 'siddham' with 'siddhi', 'success', led to Ganesa's being considered to be the donor and patron of 'Vidya', 'learning'. For Ganesa is not only 'siddhidata', 'donor of success' but also the husband of 'Siddhi, 'Siddhi' and 'Buddhi' being his consorts.

Leaving out Sampurnanda's inferences and constructions as not only unconvincing but also incorrect, we should note the very important factual reality of the alphabet not having been introduced with any formula in which Ganesa figured. In Maharashtra, on the other hand, the older formula of "om, namah siddham" as the beginning of the alphabet was discarded, in favour of one which accorded the older formula

a second place and introduced it with a bow to Ganesa, in the words "Sri Ganesaya namah". The full formula which had to be pronounced, written and mastered before a child could begin with the first letter of the Marathi alphabet came to be "Sri Ganesaya namah; om, namah siddham". And it so remained till about the end of the first decade of the 20th century. Currently, though the alphabet is no longer preceded by any such formula, the expression 'Sri Ganesa' is used as the idiomatic expression for the very basis, beginning or the elements of anything, in exactly the manner in which the 'a b c' of a thing is used as an expression in English. The Brahmins of Maharashtra dethroned the 'hated' Jina by their Ganesa who was, it appears, equally hated by the Jainas.

Sampurnanand informs us that the Jainas speak of their Lord Jina himself as Ganesa or Vinayaka and that they worship at the time of marriage "Vinayaka yantra". The formula they repeat at this worship clearly tells the followers of Jainism not to trust to any deity other than Jina himself to avert evil; for Jina is by his very nature the best shield against difficulties. It further specifies the Hindu Ganesa, the deity with elephant-face whom others invoke as the remover of obstacles, and exhorts them to eschew him altogether, his origin being unclean and inauspicious.[3]

In the extreme South of India,[4] the Tamil alphabet for the beginners started with an invocation or a bow to Narayana, "Om, namo Narayanaya". In Travancore the formula was expanded with the suffix of a bow to Ganapati thus: "Harih, Sri Ganapataye namah," "Hari, bow to Sri Ganapati." Readers will remember that a Tamil author has already informed us the difference between Tamilnad and Kerala in the matter of religious development. He states that the Kerala region contains strict sectarian votaries of Ganapati called "Ganapatyas", that Tamilnad by implication was devoid of them. Grierson[5], on the authority of the Travancore State Mannual, has added the invaluable information that the State used to maintain places where regular sacrifices to Maha Ganapati, the sectarian cult-deity, were performed for the prosperity of the State.

It is seen that in those linguistic cultural regions where the Brahmin followers of the esoteric Ganapatya sect wielded in-

fluence Ganesa or Ganapati came to the fore as the introducer of the learner to the apphabet and thus to learning. Whereas in Maharashtra the original formula was Jaina and was subordinated to the new Ganapati formula, in Travancore the original formula was itself Brahmanic or Hindu and the newer one came in only as an addition.

In Maharashtra when the Gujarat-affiliated Chalukya dynasty was ruling, Jainism received strong royal patronage. In Gujarat and Rajasthan too Jainism was receiving royal patronage for a fairly long period from about the 8th or the 9th century to about the 13th or the 14th. One of the great kings of the Maharashtrian Rashtrakutas, Amoghavarsha, in the latter part of the 9th century adopted the Jaina faith and strove to propagate it. As can be seen from the distribution of contemporary Jainas presented by Vilas A. Sangave[6] they show the third rank concentration in Maharashtra, the first and second being seen in Gajarat and Rajasthan respectively. The Brahmins of Maharashtra had a task set to them in the 10th and the 11th centuries. And that was to counteract the influence of Jainism. This work, to judge by the invocations of the learned Silahara king Aparaditya, which I have already mentioned, must have been begun in the 10th century already by Ganapatyas, though no temple consecrated to Ganapati by himself is attested in Maharashtra proper before 1500 A.D.

The earliest standing temple dedicated to Ganapati by himself, north of the Krishna, appears to be the one of Tunta-Ganapati* at Ratnapur, which lies about 16 miles north of Bilaspur in Madhya Pradesa, recorded in a stone inscription of 1181-82 A.D. as having been already in existence. A 'mandap', 'hall', was added to it in 1181-82 A.D. as stated in the inscription. The person who got the hall constructed also had erected a temple to Heramba Ganapati in the forest region at what is today known as Baluda about 30 miles north by west of Kharod.[7]

As against this progress of Ganapati in an area contiguous to Maharashtra and under the governance of a dynasty which wielded dominion over parts of north-eastern Maharashtra for a fairly long period, I find that though, as already stated, Ganapati was carved on the lintel of the front door of Saiva temples in Gujarat by the sixth decade of the 11th century,

yet so late as the last quarter of the 13th century Ganapati had continued to figure, though in a shrine by himself within or near the precincts of Somanath temple at Somanathpattana, as one of the five deities of Saiva pantheon, which was still in an indefinite condition. We are informed in the Cintra 'prasasti' of the Chalukya king Sarangadeva that at Somanathapattana the king had built the five shrines of Gorakshaka, Bhairava, Anjaneya (Hanuman), Sarasvati and Siddhi-Vinayaka.

My contention about Ganesa's rise in prestige as having been due to the activities of Maharashtrian Brahmin votaries of the esoteric sect of Ganapatyas receives eloquent support from the present position of Ganapati in parts of North India.

In the Panjab even among the class of people amongst whom the Pachayatana—the word is written and pronounced by the Panjabis as Panchayatna—worship is a daily routine, the position of Ganesa in it is not high to judge by the reason stated for His inclusion in the pentad. He is there as "the first dwarapala" or gate-keeper, the next four, viz. Kumara (Skanda), Sri, Sarasvati and Visvakarma being left out.[8]

The song sung at Ganesa-pujana, worship of Ganesa, at the outset of the marriage ceremonies by women in Mewad invites Gajanan no doubt. It refers to his fortress-abode of Ranahata-bhamara and his chowry-bearers, Riddhi and Siddhi. But it ends with a bow to Mira's lord, Lord Krishna, as the holder of the mountain. Marwad women, whether Bania, Brahmin, Chamar, Koli, Mali, Mina or Ragar, invoke Him as Vindayaka, which is believed to be a corruption of the term Vinayaka. They, however, place Him at the same fortress-abode as the women of Mewad; and end with asking for all favours, including money to defray the expenses of marriage. Darji and Mali women of Malwa calling on Ganesa on the marriage occasion speak of Him in the lighter vein, pointing out his bodily abnormalities and his gourmancy, but end with prayers for success in individual items of the complex ceremonial.[9]

In the *Times of India* issue of 21st May, 1957 there appeared a report from its "news service" which later led me to make further enquiries of my friend and old pupil Bhagwanlal L. Mankad. The report and the reply to my queries together, considered in the light of what is men-

tioned above from archaeologico-epigraphical sources about the 13th century erection of certain shrines in the temple precincts of Somanath at Somnathpattana, modern Veravala, add to the testimony.

The *Times of India* news service report from Kutch-Mandavi, almost the westernmost point of Gujarat and India today, reads thus : "More than 25000 persons attended a three day "yajna" [sacrificial rite] which culminated on Monday in the installation of the idols of Ashapurji [Asapuri], Hanumanji [Hanuman], and Ganapati at Rajda Tekri, about 13 miles from here. During the three days, all the 25000 devotees were fed on rations sent by donors. The Kutch State Road Transport Corporation arranged extra buses for the pilgrims." Mankad, writing to me from Rajkot, which stands nearly at the centre of Saurashtra, in November 1959, after stating the difficulties in the way of getting the relevant information which can be procured only by contacting some of the very few Ganapatyas that exist in the city, says: "Ganapati is one of the 'Panchadevas'. His importance is not as great as Siva, Vishnu and Goddess. Surya and Ganapati are not given so much importance to. Of course, in every Siva temple, Ganapati and Hanuman are stationed as Dwarapalas [door-keeper]. This shows that Saivites [Mr. Mankad himself is a Saivite Brahmin of the orthodox type] worship Ganapati as a god of secondary importance. Thus in Saurashtra, we do not find temples dedicated mainly to Surya and Ganapati." In the city of Rajkot at the centre of Saurashtra there is only one Ganapati shrine and that too in one of the Siva temples.

The association of Ganapati with Hanuman is very much reminiscent of the 13th century practice attested as current at the chief religious centre of Saurashtra. And in spite of Vinayaka-Ganapati's rise in divinity status generally in North India and specially in Maharashtra during these six centuries and a half or so, in Saurashtra he is still a sort of a door-keeper or better a protector. The Kutch erection of shrines for Ganapati and Hanuman again stresses the continuance of their mediaeval association. At the same time, however, the fact of their getting separate shrines to themselves not confined to the precincts of a Siva temple shows recent trend in their appreciation.

In Saurashtra and Gujarat, only persons desirous of acquiring 'powers' take to the special vow of what is known as 'sankashta chaturthi', 'evil-averter fourth' which falls on the fourth day of the dark half of a lunar month. The day is recorded as a vow-fast day in the almanacs of Panjab, U.P., Gujarat, Maharashtra, Mysore (Karnatak) and Tamilnad but not in the Andhra and the Kerala almanacs, though we are told that Ganapatyas do exist in Kerala. In the Rajasthan almanac only one of these monthly days is shown as "chaturthivrata", "fourth-vow". The Maharashtra and Gujarat almanacs show the day consistently as 'evil-averter fourth', others doing so only for one or two of these days in a year. Of the bright fourths, the famous fourth of the bright half of the lunar month of Bhadrapada is shown in all as the Ganesa-chaturthi or as the Siddhi-vinayaka 'vrata'-fast or festival, though regular worship of the image of Ganapati on that day is current only in Maharashtra, Mysore (Karnataka), Andhradesa and Tamilnad. In Orissa, I am informed, the worship is not unknown.

Whether the image of Ganesa is worshipped or not, all Hindus are enjoined to avoid seeing the moon on the 'Ganesa chaturthi' day on pain of having to suffer some obloquy if that injunction is not observed. They are warned by the citation of some obloquy that even Lord Krishna had to suffer when he inadvertently saw the moon that day. Silly tales are invented to explain the origin of this injunction which only testify to the childish credulity of the people when they are fear-ridden and superstition-minded.

The fact of the matter is that the vow-fast of the dark fourth of a lunar month, whether undertaken by persons to cure a special ill that they or their near and dear ones are suffering from or by the sectarian devotees who desire to attain special powers, which has to be kept during the day, can be broken with the worship of Ganesa in the evening only after the moon is seen and worshipped. It is reported in connection with the observance of this fast that sometimes in one of the three months of the monsoon the moon not being at all visible the votary has to go on fasting till the moon is seen. Of course, it is always possible to use certain subterfuges to avoid a complete fast till the sighting of the

moon.

So close is the interdependence of Ganesa-worship and moon-worship on the dark-fourth that one cannot help wondering whether it is not out of the sense of loss of prestige that the extreme sectarians, the staunch Ganapatyas, managed a fiat whereby on the most important day of Ganesa, the bright fourth of the lunar month Bhadrapada, even the sight, let alone worship, of the moon was strictly prohibited. To prop up the fiat they used the calamitous and calumnious situation in which Lord Krishna had once found himself and fathered it on to his having sighted the moon on the forbidden day.

That the Ganapatyas could have done this should be reasonably clear to those who view that whole development of the Vinayaka Ganapati complex without any bias or prejudice. About the second quarter of the 14th century, Namadev, the saint-poet and religious organizer of Maharashtra with an all-India fame, significance and influence from his time to date, while praising Ganesa at the beginning of his poetic endeavours adds to the Pauranic story of the disappearance and later reunion of Pradyumna, the son of Lord Krishna his own (?) explanation in terms of Ganesa's greatness. He states that Krishna could get back Pradyumna who was removed on his very birth because Krishna worshipped Ganesa. He ascribed even Yudhishthira's getting his kingdom to the prowess of Ganesa. He assures his readers, as he must have convinced his large number of listeners, that Yudhishthira got the throne back by worshipping Ganesa on the fourth.[10] As the fourth is not specified we may conclude that vow-fast of the dark-fourth is meant, though the special worship on the bright-fourth of Bhadrapada is not necessarily excluded.

That the fourth of a month was the specific day for Ganesa is very tellingly asserted by Jnanesvara[11] the great senior contemporary of Namadev. Ekanatha, the great Maharashtrian humanist, a saint-poet-philosopher of the first order and an organizer of great ability, in his *Rukminisvayamvara*[12] has described in rather lurid and repulsive detail the woes brought on the marriage party that was formed at the marriage of Krishna and Rukmini owing to some of the party

having slighted Ganesa, and how Lord Krishna himself mollified Vinayaka Ganesa by offering him his special sweet dish and averted further calamities.

Namadev[13] furnishes us authentic information about the purpose and nature of the vow-fast of 'Samkashtachaturthi', 'the evil-averting-fourth'. He tells us that when the cowherdesses complained to Yasoda about the pranks of her son Krishna, Yasoda vowed to Ganesa that she will observe the fast of the dark-fourth if He would keep Krishna on good behaviour. Having found her son's conduct to be exemplary for a whole month, on the following dark-fourth Yasoda kept the vow-fast. Having fasted during the day, just before the rise of the moon she prepared the sweets to be offered to Ganesa and kept them near Ganesa's place. Krishna having seen the delictable sweets got impatient and asked his mother when she would give him the sweets. She replied she would give him after worshipping Ganesa and she went away to make preparations for the worship. When she came back she saw the sweets missing. She was shocked and asked Krishna who was quietly watching the fun about the sweets. He protested and asserted that about a thousand mice had invaded the place during her absence on one of the biggest of which rode Vinayaka who with his trunk gulped down all the sweets. Yasoda naturally wrathful began to beat Krishna. Krishna opening his mouth showed his mother Vinayaka Ganesa sitting there and the whole episode ended.

In the unfolding of the aggrandisement of Ganapati-Vinayaka I have purposely left out all reference to the so-called *Upanishad* ascribed to the group of such works under the fourth Veda, the Atharvaveda, and known as *Ganesatharvasirsham*. I have done so not only because there is hardly any philosophy in it excepting an attempt at mystic identification of Ganesa with the Brahman but because the manuscripts on which it is based are all very late. The Anandasrama Sanskrit Series founded by a Chitpavan Brahmin of Maharashtra could not possibly be begun without it as the first book of the Series. How could a Maharashtrian Brahmin begin a venture of that kind leaving out a text glorifying Ganesa and cast in the mould of ancient literary text? So in the year 1888 A.D. was printed and published Sri *Ganesatharvasir-*

sham with the help of five *Mss* all of which appear to have come from one or other of the Chitpavan Brahmin families of Maharashtra. The earliest of it is dated 1816 A.D. and was owned by M. C. Apte the proprietor and the enthusiastic originator of the Series. Another *Ms* came from a Brahmin of Chinchvad, a place near Poona, which, as will be clear in the sequel, has been the centre of Ganapati glorification of the most exaggerated kind from about the middle of the sixteenth century A.D. And it is dated 1877 A.D. A third *Ms* from a Brahmin at Umbergav in Thana district is dated 1886 A.D. What authenticity of manuscripts! It could and can satisfy only the staunch sectarians but will leave others very cold. And nothing is known about the commentator of the text who has further heaped glorification on Ganapati.

The case of *Ganesagita* is in a way still worse, for it is a poor imitation of the *Bhagavadgita*, trying to substitute Ganesa for Krishna. That the author of the *Ganesagita*[14] was concerned with raising the status of his favourite deity is clear from this substitution. And not being quite sure that his purpose would be gained by such substitution alone the author has put in, what must have been considered by him to be, a strong plea in favour of it by ascribing to Ganapati the exhortation that not to distinguish between Him and Siva, Vishnu, Sakti and Surya is the proper Yoga or technique of salvation. It is clear that even when this text was composed Ganapati was not quite firmly established in the Panchayatana or the Hindu pentad and the author wanted to make sure of His position as the equal of the older deities Siva, Vishnu, Devi and Surya and as the recipient of daily worship on equal terms.

While passing, it must be noted that it is in this *Ganesagita* that the bright fourth of the lunar month of Bhadrapada is singled out as the day of special worship of Ganapati, whose image either in wood or clay was to be made specifically for the purpose. It is on this day that the special worship of the deity is performed with much eclat in Maharashtra, Andhradesa, Mysore-Karnatak and to some extent also in Orissa and Tamilnad.

In Maharashtra, where the importance and spread of Ganapati worship in the month of Bhadrapada is the greatest,

the bright fourth of the lunar month of Magha (February) is regarded as "Ganesajayanti" i.e. as the day of Ganesa's birth. And at the two of the eight famous centres of Ganapati temples and worship in Maharashtra, viz., Chinchwad and Theur, the former about 11 miles to the west and the latter about the same distance to the east of Poona city, the day is marked by celebrations. The Chinchwad celebration is a fairly big affair as will be stated later. The close connection of Ganapati-appreciation and glorification with Maharashtrian Brahmins becomes clear with the celebration of this day's festival at Ganapati Pule (Ganapati Pol as the *District Gazetteer*[15] of 1880 has it) near Ratnagiri where Govindapant Bundele, one of the Sirdars of the Peshwa, built a temple of Ganapati on the cliff close to the beach, in the middle of the 18th century. Bundeles, Karhada Brahmins, originally bore the surname Kher and came from Nevare in Ratnagiri district.

Before proceeding with the story of Ganapati glorification it is necessary that for the apprehension of the complex nature of this deity and just valuation of the recent politico-social development of His festival, I should draw the readers' attention to some very significant features which are the characteristics of this festival of the four-armed elephant-faced God. First, the festival lasts for varying periods, the disposal of the worshipped image may take place the same evening as among some Tamil castes,[16] or the next morning as among some Telugu and Kannadiga castes and not earlier than the afternoon of the second day as uniformly in Maharashtra. There is no evidence in the case of regions other than Maharashtra that the installed image was kept or could be kept for a longer period. In Maharashtra, however, there appears to have been a wide range about disposal period, from the standard one-and-a half-day, through five and higher number of odd days to the fast day of the bright fourteenth, which is known as 'Anantachaturdasi' 'Cobra-king's fourteenth'. The latter is only a discretionary festival observed by some Brahmin families. Second, the disposal of the worshipped image is to be made preferably in the sea or a running stream and may be made in a pond or a well, which must be other than one's own. Thus the disposal of the worshipped image of Ganesa was in some way a public affair though carried out

by each worshipper as his individual task. Some kind of 'bhajan', 'devotional chanting aloud' to the accompaniment of the jingling of cymbals may be presumed to have always been a concomitant. Third, in Maharashtra, Mysore-Karnatak and Andhradesa—my information about the practice in Tamilnad is not adequate to enable me to pronounce one way or the other—high over the head of the image a more or less square wooden structure with all kinds of vegetables, fruits and tender shoots of flowering or leafy plants kept hanging from it is fixed up. This feature must lend support to the theory that looks upon Ganesa as the protector of all kinds of fruits, flowers and vegetables, in short as a vegetation spirit which can destroy if not mollified, though perhaps it cannot necessarily help plenty if pleased. The presence of mouse as the vehicle of the deity is the visible fear of destruction of crops, particularly fruits and grain. The master, Ganapati, being mollified by worship, prayer and the presentation of sweets, the servant must keep quiet and harmless.

The fourth and fifth features which I should like to mention here have wider bearing on the sociology of Hindu religion and may be separately commented upon. The fourth feature of this festival is its association with the worship of Gauri, who as Parvati is, according to mythology, to be considered as Ganesa's mother. In both Maharashtra and Mysore-Karnatak this feature is present but by all accounts the association of Gauri in Maharashtra is so preponderant as to make the Gauri-festival the more marked one wherever, as in rural Deccan, it is the most widely spread of the festival observed by non-Brahmin groups. I have elsewhere [17] drawn attention to the fact that in the village of Lonikand, so near to Poona city, in the first quarter of the last century a keen student of rural life noted the prevalence and described the practice of Gauri festival without so much as referring to the festival of Ganesa. In the Konkan, especially the southern part of it, where the Gauri festival is not much in vogue, we have the special worship of Siva and Parvati. The picture of Siva is pasted on or tied to a green coconut with its tethering intact and that of Parvati to a sheaf of flowering or leafy plants, the same as those that are tied to the squarish wooden frame hanging over the head of Ganapati. They are installed one

day previous to the fourth and are disposed off on the second day of Ganapati's fourth. All this supports the hypothesis of Ganesa festival being, in Maharashtra, Mysore and Andhra-desa at least, a component of the worship of vegetation spirit.

The fifth feature of Ganesa and His worship is the fact that only the person actually carrying out the elaborate worship—in orthodox Brahmin houses the whole Vedic ritual of 'pranapratishtha', 'establishment of the Spirit', intended to bring the Godly Essence to reside in the clay image for the time being, has to be performed before the image can be offered the worship appropriate for Ganapati—keeps fast, not taking anything before worship and taking only some fruit or milk or both in the evening. In this respect and in the absence of any celebration of the festival in any temple, Ganapati festival differs from the fasts and festivals in honour of Siva and Vishnu. For Sivaratri, the great fast in honour of Siva, devotional meetings take place in temples and tend to continue through the whole night. And it is a fast kept by many who never worship any diety. Vishṇu-fasts and festivals as will be mentioned in the proper place are many of them publicly celebrated in temples with great eclat and devotional and other concourses take place not only for a day but even for a whole week. The fasts connected with them are kept by many irrespective of the fact of actual worship.

The story of the glorification of Ganesa in Maharashtra divides itself into four periods of which the first two will be covered in this chapter. First period begins with the 12th century; the second, with the great Jnanesvara; the third, with Moraya Gosavi of Morgav and Chinchwad about the latter part of the 16th century; and the fourth, which is quite distinct in kind from the previous periods and ushers in the politico-social aspect, begins with Lokamanya B. G. Tilak in the year 1893 A.D.

Mukundaraja's great philosophical and poetic treatise called *Vivekasindhu* is by common consent the earliest of Marathi works,[18] having been completed in A.D. 1188. It is to be noted that Mukundaraja simply makes a bow to Ganesa and then to his preceptor Ramachandra but invokes his tutelary deity Siva. In his time the king of the part of the country, where Mukundaraja lived, Nagpur region, Jaitapala by

name, was a Jaina and a great proselytizer of Jainism; and Mukundaraja is said to have interceded with his powerful Vedantic arguments on behalf of Brahmanism. Ganesa was acknowledged as the deity to whom a bow should be made at the beginning of a book without much further ado and the proper invocatory address and request was to be reserved for one's own tutelary deity.

With Jnanesvara's composition of his poetic commentary on the *Bhagavadgita,* completed in the year 1290 A.D., a whole century after Mukundaraja's Vedantic work, giving to the Maharashtrians a devotional treatise as the firm foundation for the later Vaishnava edifice, Ganapati was implanted on the throne of Brahmanhood which later saint-poets, except perhaps Tukarama to some extent, did not only not disturb but to which also added their quota of extra praise and veneration. In nineteen verses of his great treatise, Jnanesvara has identified the parts of Ganesa's body, his weapons and paraphernalia with various doctrines, branches of Vedic and philosophic learning, systematised long before, to establish Ganesa's bodily identity with the Highest Brahma. Ganesa is thus not only the highest learning incarnate but carries in his crest as followers the ten principal *Upanishads,* which had long come to represent direct knowledge of Brahma. Even the broken tooth of Ganesa, the mark of his discomfiture and the seal of his being no warrior, is turned into a great triumphal insignia, representing according to Jnanesvara the vanquished doctrine of Buddha. Summarizing his detailed identification into a configuration Jnanesvara finally imagines the letter 'a', which is the first letter of the sacred syllable 'Om' in his pair of feet, 'u' in his large belly and 'm' in his big forehead and thus transfixes Ganesa's body as the sacred syllable 'Om'. To see Ganesa thus is to visualize Om', a great feat and an unequalled privelege for any devout Hindu. Even with this extravagant and exaggerated glorification, even in that extrarational mood, the poet-philosopher, however, does not forget the fact that Ganesa is after all 'Vighnaraja', 'the lord of obstacles.'

As if not completely satisfied with his performance in favour of his sectarian deity—I think Jnanesvara, though his sect was that of 'Naths' was also a Ganapatya and became a

Vaishnava and the spearhead of the movement that established the sect of Vithoba-devotees—he devotes a number of verses to add to His glorification but in a garbled manner through being identified with his spiritual preceptor. At the beginning of the 17th chapter Jnanesvara bows to his 'preceptor-king' as Ganendra and beseeches Him to enable him to proceed further with the great task of expounding the meaning of the *Gita*. In doing this, he so to say gives his reason, stating that even Siva who is traditionally looked upon as the preceptor had to call upon Ganendra's aid to free Himself from the vortex of the three 'gunas'. In this metaphorical reference there is the suggestion that Siva was able to kill the demon Tripura because he worshipped and prayed to Ganesa, a suggestion mentioned by Jnanesvara's junior contemporary Namadev too. He explains away Ganesa's epithet of 'Vakratunda' 'ill-faced', as His special aspect towards those who neglect or misunderstand Him.

Raising Ganesa on the pinnacle of Brahmahood, seeing Him as 'Om' incarnate, glorifying Him as the saviour of His father Siva, and hinting at His non-devotees' condign punishment by Him, Jnanesvara does not enthrone Ganesa by Himself as the dispenser of literary power and expository art. He states [19] that only as the benedictory gift of the preceptor can Ganesa enable one to have fluent mastery over language and exposition. Consistent with this view at the beginning of his great work the poet-pholosopher, immediately after his elaborate and invocatory panegyric on Ganesa, devotes a verse to Sarada or Sarasvati as she is called, the Goddess of Learning, and bows down to her. Thereafter he pays his homage to his preceptor who is his real inspirer.

Namadev, a non-Brahmin junior contemporary and pupil of Jnanesvara, devotes one verse to Gananatha to register his salutation to Him. The second verse devoted to Sarada though similarly a salutation yet refers to her capacity to bestow powers of speech. Once again he bows down to Ganesa, after having attributed to Him some exploits which as I have already noted are not his in mythology. And this time[20] he is positive about Ganesa's power to bestow the knowledge of all the fourteen branches of learning and His capacity to make even a dumb fellow repeat the Vedic mantras and beseeches

his favour to enable him to describe Krishna's boyish sports. But Namadev is not confident that Ganesa, though glorified in this manner, will by Himself be able to grant him the powers required for his task! That is why he devotes the next para to register his moving appeal to Sarasvati whom he addresses as 'mother' and entreats her to bless him with her boons and thus save him from ridicule!

Without entering into the intricacies of the confused history of the origin and development of the sect called the 'Nathapanth', its connection with the long-standing belief in 'Siddhas', 'perfected individuals' or its connection with the Yoga-philosophy and its antecedents in the *Upanishads* or again its relation to such Saiva sects as the Kapalikas which were vigorously combated by Sri Sankaracharya and his followers or the nature of the impetus received by the formation of the Dasnami ascetic orders[21] it may be stated that its promulgators reached Maharashtra before the 12th century A.D. About a century later another religious sect, with some similar practices about worship and some doctrines about the accepted Hindu pantheon reducing it to a secondary position, that of the Manabhavas, arose or was activated through some Saurashtra infiltration in Berar, the region where, too, the Natha sect prospered.

The Natha sect as its early affiliation and later spread make it clear was not confined to India. It was so strong in Nepal that it might have even originated there. It has its Muslim followers and thus spreads west-east from Afghanistan and Makran coast to Assam and north-south from Jammu to Madras and outside India to Ceylon.[22] The Manabhava sect has been confined to Maharashtra mostly, though it is stated that it captured adherents to its doctrines and practices among the Muslims of Afghanistan.[23] In both, the importance of the spiritual preceptor was carried to great extremes almost from their origin, so much so that he became the followers' God on earth, to whom was to belong anything and everything of the devotees's own, to whom the utmost submission and self-abnegation were to be most willingly shown, looking upon such subserviance as the golden opportunity and the surest passport to salvation!

The Natha sect is a Saiva sect which owed its organiza-

tion, spread and power to the activities of one Goraksha or Gorakhnatha, who as we have already seen, got enshrined in the Saiva pentad before the 14th century A.D. Its insistence on Yoga and the occult 'Power' supposed to lie dormant in the bodily structure itself would suggest that worship of any diety is not a tenet with it. Yet it seems, not only did it in its extravagant claims and manifestations imitate the utterly rule-less conduct of an 'avadhuta' setting at naught all the decencies of social living but also it showed its reverence for the greatest of 'avadhutas', Dattatreya, Datta, the Atreya, Datta or Dattaguru, Datta the preceptor as he has come to be known commonly in Maharashtra. The Manabhavas doctrinally sponsored Datta, though, as will be seen later, in a slightly different aspect.

It is, therefore, not surprising that Datta-cult, which in other words is also the cult of the spiritual preceptor, should have come into existence in Maharashtra. The excesses of both the sects Natha and Manabhava, had to be toned down in a cultural milieu where already two powerful geniuses, Jnanesvara and Namadev, the latter also an emotional appeal of volcanic power, had combined the toned-down features in a harmonious whole of religious belief and practice centred on personal God, who was till then Vishnu, the God of an old and time-honoured sect. And Datta even in early mythology is represented as an incarnation of Vishnu. The new sect of Datta went one better by choosing a form of Godhead which combined both Vishnu and Siva plus Brahma then effete but all the same remembered as the member of an ancient triad.

One Sripada Sri Vallabha of what would appear to be Andhra affiliation being from Pithapuram, provided, evidently by some mystic hypnotic powers he wielded, the starting point for the sect. But the real centre of the sect and the source of its strength was provided by his Maharashtrian disciple, Nrisimha, a Brahmin from Berar who early in his youth while just twelve years old took ascetic orders under that known as Sarasvati of the Dasnami ascetics. His field of action lay in Kolhapur and Solapur districts. A number of stories narrated about him make it clear that he was one of the very few Hindu active workers, whether in the field

of practical life or in that of intellectual or spiritual, who was able to establish some kind of rapport with the Muslim rulers and their henchmen enabling him and his disciples to do some active propaganda for their sect, besides the two above mentioned sects whose work was not considered as purely Hindu. Even the purely Maharashtrian sect, the Manabhavas, for various reasons developed a secret script to record their work and perhaps had some kind of patois to carry messages to their own people (?)

It is the atmosphere of panic, helplessness and despair in which was bred the doctrine of deification of the spiritual preceptor and the abject surrender of the disciple and follower that resulted in the absence of great literary works and or intense intellectual activity which must explain the aggrandisement of the Godhead of Ganapati as the remover of obstacles. In an even more pronounced manner does the atmosphere account for the ascription of control over learning to Ganapati, especially as the Vedic text used in His worship identifies Him with Brahmanaspati, the lord of chants and consequently of speech and learning.

It can hardly be an accident that the particular-day worship of Ganapati, that on the bright fourth of the lunar month of Bhadrapada, which is technically described as the vow-fast of Siddhi-Vinayaka, is the most favoured day of feast and festival in Maharashtra. The growth of the three sects which, in more or less measure, lay great stress on Yoga in the four centuries from the 12th to the 15th must have given a fillip to that aspect of Vinayaka Ganapati which was believed to be concerned with 'Siddhi' which ordinarily means 'success' but technically signifies 'occult power.'

Anyway in the book called *Gurucharitra,* which is exceptional in being the only book among Maharashtrians to be kept by the devotees and sectarians among or by the side of household idols and made an object of daily worship, written by a Brahmin named Sarasvati Gangadhara about 1450 A.D. devotes some portion to what can only be considered as the glorification of Ganapati. In this endeavour Sarasvati Gangadhara has even invented (?) an episode, not traced in standard mythology which was calculated to boost up Ganapati and must have had its specific purpose, to judge by the

respect paid to Him in literature following and in practice in the years immediately succeeding Sarasvati Gangadhar's endeavour.

In *Gurucharitra,* read and listened to by thousands of pious Maharashtrians during the last five centuries, Sarasvati Gangadhara states that when Siva granted 'his own Linga' to Ravana and when Ravana had already begun carrying it away to his country, Vishnu got mightily upset, because if Ravana had installed it in his capital he would have been invincible, and pious people under His care would have been deprived of an object of worship. In his resourcefulness Vishnu could think of no better plan than that of calling upon the aid of the tiny-looking God Ganapati, the creator, *par excellence,* of obstacles. He asked Ganapati so to act as to prevent Ravana's taking the 'Linga' to his country. Ganapati, the head-imp of Parvati and of Siva was quite up to the task, which lay in the line of his speciality. He lay in wait for Ravana to catch him in a situation where he would have to seek the aid of some good fellow to relieve him of the Linga for some short while. It was stipulated, it must be stated, by Siva that if the 'Linga' got placed on any spot it could not then be lifted and that it would 'grow' into the particular spot. Ganapati as a small innocent and obliging boy acted his part well and got Ravana to confide in him and leave the 'Linga' for a short while in Ganapati's hands, till he had relieved himself and had said his 'sandhya'-adoration. Before Ravana could finish his duties Ganapati cleverly managed to place the 'Linga' on the spot where it got rooted and Ravana had to leave discomfitted. The place where this happened is the famous town of Gokarna in North Kanara. The deity there is known as Mahabalesvara and is believed to be very potent. At the annual Sivaratri, huge crowds of pilgrims from all over India gather; but the fame of the pilgrimage centre is the greatest among the Maharashtrians and Kannadigas. Small wonder that Ganapati's stock should rise in Maharashtra for this supposed act of His with such benevolent results. First, it defeated Ravana's attempt to remain invincible; and second, it provided them with a potent 'Linga' centre so near to them.

That the peculiar intervention of Ganapati or Vinayaka

is a special contribution of Sarasvati Gangadhara to the great glorification of Ganapati becomes clear on a comparison with the traditional belief about another such 'Linga' in the far distant Santhal Paraganas[24] of Bengal. At Deoghar, the great temple centre of the district, there is one Siva temple whose deity is now known as Vaidyanatha but was formerly called Ravanesvara because the great 'Linga' of the temple is believed to have been the one which Ravana had secured from Siva on the same condition as stated in *Gurucharitra* account of Ganapati's benevolent intervention. But the agent through whom similar result was achieved at Deoghar was Vishnu himself in the guise of a Brahmin. Ganapati does not come in the picture at all. This should leave no doubt in the minds of my readers that Sarasvati Gangadhara's invention was calculated to boost Ganapati, and that Ganapati Vinayaka came to the minds of the religious elite even in the middle of the 15th century naturally as the great obstacle-making deity.

Sarasvati Gangadhara devises another opportunity for him to impress upon his pious and credulous readers the greatness of and the importance of the worship of Ganapati. While describing the pilgrimage centre Kasi-Varanasi he draws upon the sectarian lore about thirty forms of Ganapati mentioned in the late Puranic account in the 'Kasikhanda' portion. He details their temples in Varanasi and enjoins the would-be pilgrim to offer them worship before proceeding further.

Singing, that too not only in simple devotional tunes but in the well-systematized classical melodies also, seems to have been one of the adjuncts of both the Natha and the Datta sects. Certainly it was a characteristic trait of the former sect which used to and does enjoin the devotee to carry a 'sarangi', the seven-stringed highly precise musical instrument. And it is equally a fact that in the *Gurucharitra* we have an account of the musical notes and 'ragas' or melodies fully classified and their presiding deities mentioned. Without suggesting that I have studied and explored the complete history of this procedure, I may mention that perhaps it was first detailed by Sarangadev, the great Kashmirian Brahmin, who in the 13th century wrote his standard treatise on classical music and dance at the court of the Yadavas of Devgiri. According to Sarasvati Gangadhar, Gananatha is the presiding deity of

the 'panchama' note and the 'flavour', characteristic 'feeling-tone', is laughter, but according to the expert Sarangadev, Ganesvara is the deity of the note, 'dhaivata' and the 'feeling-tones,' characteristic of him are disgust and fear.

Ekanatha, the humanist, the scholar who rendered the religious contents of the *Bhagavatapurana* into poetical Marathi and through it has taught Maharashtrians religious doctrines and moral principles ever since, also wrote a brochure on Ganesa. I have already quoted his glorification of Ganapati made in a religio-poetical work, a quarter of a century before Moraya Gosavi, the single-minded devotee of Ganesa, placed Him on the pinnacle of the glory of Godhood.

Invocations made by Ekanatha, who combined in himself the schools of Natha and Datta sects along with the philosophical Bhagavatism of Jnanesvara and both the philosophical and devotional Vaishnavism of Namadev, in some of his most-read books, are conveniently available in *Ekanatha,* an anthology made by G. G. Tipnis. In his invocation of Ganadhipati he follows Jnanesvara's path in the main. Along with some modifications making the description compact be adds an explanation, a philosophical one at that, of the rather ludicrous looking feature of the great God in the form of his special mount which is the tiny animal, mouse. Ekanatha's explanation is that Ganesa is called 'Mushakavahana' because He is so subtle that He is subtler than the subtlest. Even with such idealization of Ganesa, Ekanatha does not address Him his invocation for the endowment of logical, poetical and literary power to infuse his work with. This he reserves for Sarasvati whom he calls the Goddess of Speech and the Enlightener of intellect and whose mount swan typifies selective ability.

Further rise of Ganapati, somewhat of a militant nature, was mainly due to Chitpavan Brahmins and emanated from Poona.

8

GANESA ATTAINS POLITICAL STATUS IN POONA

Sectarians and Brahmins succeeded in raising Ganesa, Ganapati or Vinayaka to the status of an important deity of the Hindu pantheon, placed Him securely in the pantheonic pentad and secured Him the distinction of being the one deity to be invoked at the beginning of any undertaking. The common people responded in a more or less halting manner in regard to His annual feast-festival falling on the bright fourth of the lunar month of Bhadrapad. Evidence for the halting nature of the response will be presented later from Maharashtra, the region where this feast-festival is believed to have been the most common. However, with all the glorification and aggrandisement, Ganapati had not succeeded in getting a public recognition as in the case of Krishna or Siva whose fast-festivals have been public occasions, celebrated as group occasions since a long time. Nor is there any temple dedicated to Ganapati in Maharashtra which can be positively taken as dating from before the 15th century A.D.

The devotion to Ganapati of one Brahmin family, which is known to have lived at Morgav in Baramati taluka of Poona district, situated to the south-east of Poona city about 35 miles, brought Ganapati as a deity into great prominence in Poona district and city, provided Him with temples well-known in Maharashtra and publicized by Brahmins, particularly Chitpavan Brahmins, in Poona district and its environs. The first person to draw the limelight of publicity on himself was one Moresvara or Moraya Gosavi. He lived in the second half of the 16th and the first half of the 17th centuries.[1] The family is supposed to have come from Karnatak and was Ganapatya in religious affiliation.

Captain Sykes writing in 1819[2], from the oral accounts evidently of people from Poona and Chinchwad, under the heading "An Account of the Origin of the Living God at the

Village of Chinchore, near Poona", records a curse and its actual effect on the family of Moraya or Moroba laid by Moroba himself which occurred in the seventh generation. Moroba's great-grandson's great-grandson, Dharanidhara II —Dhurmadhur as Sykes has it—died childless. This event according to Sykes occurred in about 1810. And he remarks: "The imposture should have ended here; but the Brahmins, with a laudable determination to preserve the valuable bequests to the temple ..... and they have set up a boy of the name of Suckharee, a distant relative of Dhurmadhur [Dharanidhara]". The effectiveness of the curse of Moroba was in itself the completion of the boon conferred on him by God Ganapati when He was pleased to take His abode at Chinchwad to relieve old Moroba of the distress of a journey to Morgav from Chinchwad for paying his monthly visit to the God at Morgav who was his patron deity. The boon promised that the God of Morgav would incarnate Himself in the person of Moroba and his descendants for seven generations, and would fix his residence at Chinchwad where Moroba was to build a temple. In fulfilment of the promise, a conical stone, the usual symbolic representation of God Ganesa, arose at Moroba's residence at Chinchwad when he returned from Morgav after the pronouncement of the boon. Later with each descendant of Moroba in the eldest line a similar stone appeared, establishing the continuance of the Godhood in them.

Moroba's son, Chintamana was the greatest of the descendants. It was during his career that there is believed to have been some trial of religious prowess with the devotee of Vitthala and a northern neighbour of Chintamana, Tukarama. It is since his exploits, temple-building and organizing of the celebration of his father's death anniversary on the dark 6th of the lunar month of Margaseersha that the family assumed the surname of Dev, i.e. god, in place of its old Vaishnavite name of Saligrama. Chintamana, of course, raised the tombstone on his father's body and laid the foundations of his later glorification. The temple dedicated to Moroba was built in 1658 A.D. On the 6th of the dark fortnight of the lunar month of Margasirsha, the day of Moroba's death, every year a fair is held at Chinchwad. The fair which is largely

attended, is looked upon as one in honour of Ganapati. In addition, Chintamana erected at least two of the remaining seven temples of Ganapati famed in Maharashtra as the ones whose presiding Ganesa is believed to have spontaneously emerged.

Of the famed eight temples five are near Poona: at 1) Theur, a village about 12 miles to the west of Poona city about a mile off the Poona-Sholapur road; 2) Morgav in Baramati taluka about 37 miles south-east of Poona; 3) Rajangav, in Sirur taluka about 28 miles north-east of Poona; 4) Ojhar in Junnar taluka about 45 miles north of Poona; and 5) one at Lenyadri near Junnar. It is to be noticed that the list does not mention the one at Chinchwad itself. But the list of special names of Ganapatis at the various famous temples takes note of it; for the deity of Chinchwad temple is the only one known as 'Mangalamurti', 'auspicious idol.' The one at Morgav is and was known as Moresvara' after whom Moroba himself was named. We know from his life account that that temple must have existed before, how much before one cannot say, Moroba's birth. The one at Chinchwad may be said to have been built by Moroba himself. Those at Theur and Ranjangav were built by his son Chintamani before 1700 A.D. The deity at Theur is known as Chintamani. The temple received great attention from the Peshwa Madhavrao I (1761-72 A.D.) who added some nine verandahs to expand the temple. And we are told[3] that he spent then Rs. 40000 for the additions, whereas Chintamani had spent, barely sixty to seventy years before, an equal sum on the construction of the main temple.

Of the remaining three temples of Ganapati one is in Ahmadnagar district, one at Madh near Khopoli in Kolaba district and one at Murud, a big village in Janjira, known for a large number of Chitpavan Brahmin families. The Peshwa's interest in the temple at Theur stems from the fact that the tutelary or family deity of the Peshwas was Ganapati. It was during the regime of the previous Peshwa, Balaji Bajirao that in 1755 the Ganapati Rangmahal, Ganapti-ceremonial hall, for celebrating the annual festival was built and a marble image of the deity fixed in its wall. The famous Tulsibag temple of Poona, at which Rama is the deity of the principal

shrine, has a shrine to Ganapati, too; and it was built by Balaji Bajirao in 1761.[4]

This interest in Ganapati was evidently the consequence of the impression that Moroba made upon his contemporaries round Poona. His capacity for religious experience and the miracle attributed to him making him 'a living god' inspired confidence in his patron deity; and Ganapati got a fillip. The famous Ganapati temple of Poona, which is first to be visited on any auspicious occasion like marriage in the family of a Poona resident, that in Kasbapeth, is believed to have been built by the mother of Shivaji about 1636 A.D.[5] And Chintamani Dev's personality and zealous propaganda taking concrete shape in Ganapati temples quickened the interest among the devout and the credulous. We have an entry in the Peshwa correspondence file[6] dated 2nd May, 1739, wherein the appearance of Ganesa image on a huge stone-slab at Pashan-Banere very near Poona—it appears it was a dolmen —led to excavations being stealthily carried on at the spot to unearth the supposed wealth underneath.

Balaji Bajirao's provision of a splendid hall for Ganapati-festival was duly appreciated and fully utilized by Madhavrao I by spending Rs. 2682 on the annual festival in the year 1767, the entry suggesting that the period of the celebration covered a whole month, 25th September to 24th October.[7] Madhvrao's interest in the Ganesa temple at Theur, where it would seem he was a frequent visitor and where he later died, is not the only indication of a quickened interest in Ganapati shown by the Peshwas. It is also to be remembered that perhaps the most influential 'sirdar' of the Peshwas from this time onwards was the Patawardhan family; and one of them is thought to have had the greatest influence with Madhavrao I. The tutelary deity of Patawardhans, too, is Ganapati. Captain Moor[8] writing on the 'living Deity' of Chinchwad in the year 1800 A.D., vouchsafes the interesting information that "a grant of inam lands about *Chinchoor* [Chinchwad] of thirteen thousand rupees per annum, was made, at different times, by a late *Peshwa,* on what account, whether miraculous or not, I do not learn". That Moor did not attribute the grant to Madhavrao II is clear from the sequel, for later he mentions the gift of a caparisoned elephant to the same 'godly

state' by 'the late *Peshwa*, Madhoo Rao' who was Madhavrao II. We may conclude that it was Madhavrao I who made the inam-grant to Chinchwad 'godly state'.

The increased and fervid attention to the almost new deity, who happened to be the family or tutelary deity of the Peshwa, who by now formed the pivot of the so-called Maratha confederacy, at this time, i.e., about and after the battle of Panipat, must be noted with special interest as a sociological phenomenon. The mortal defeat of the Maratha armies at Panipat in 1761 A.D. cast a terrific gloom over Maharashtra. The leaders at Poona, the Peshwa family and its admirers and supporters, all felt crestfallen and panic-stricken. To add to the sense of an impending and ignoble doom, the Nizam, the hereditary enemy of Maharashtra, had succeeded in burning Poona in 1768. The fillip to superstition and credulity was full and strong. The access of credulity among Poona people at this time cannot be better illustrated than by the miracle supposed to have been performed by the third pontiff of Chinchwad, Narayan Dev, the son of Chintamani. Moor was evidently told that it was in connection with Nizam's invasion of Poona. Nizam after devastating Poona, was intending to proceed to Chinchwad, a flourishing town then, to loot it. The pontiff is said to have sent him a word that his spiritual power would reduce everything of his to utter ruins if he dared advance on Chinchwad. The Nizam is supposed to have taken recourse to discretion in perference to military skill. He decided to test the vaunted spiritual prowess of the Chinchwad pontiff, and sent him a present, which was fresh cow's flesh covered over with a costly piece of cloth. The pontiff is said to have touched the present and sent it with the same messengers as a return-gift to the Nizam. The Nizam's men on uncovering it were surprised to find nothing but the choicest flowers there! This demonstration of spiritual prowess persuaded the Nizam to leave Chinchwad alone. In Sykes' account it is the Delhi emperor Alumgeer (?) who is said to have tested the Chinchwad pontiff's power in this particular manner! Moor's account of the supposed episode ends with the assertion that a very large grant of land, yielding an annual revenue of twenty-seven thousand rupees was made by the Muslim authorities. Whoever made that grant—and

we may be sure that it must be the Peshwas rather than the Muslim lords—it had continued to be enjoyed by the 'godly state' of Chinchwad when Moor visited it.

The next Peshwa, Bajirao II, in power at the time of Moor's visit, made[9] a grant of inam land of the annual value of four thousand rupees to the Ganapati temple at Ozar, which too, appears to have been built by one of the Chinchwad Devs. The reverential awe with which Devs were treated by the Peshwa is made very clear in Moor's description of Dev's visit to Morgav.

The aggrandisement of Ganapati with the help of the glorification and the supposed miracle-working powers of the family of Dev pontiffs of Chinchwad till 1820 A.D. at least had very largely remained a Brahmin movement. Shivaji's mother is supposed to have built the Kasba Ganapati temple; but the supposed structure was more of the nature of a shelter or covering rather than a regular temple. And that was raised over a previously existing stone. We do not find Shivaji himself or even his mother paying any attention to Moroba anytime. And Shivaji, the great and sagacious political leader that he was, was not only a very pious man but also a devout Hindu who readily appreciated the possession of uncommon power of religious experience. We know how early in his career he waited on Tukarama the great devotee of Vithoba and a really inspired religious preacher. We know, too, that whether on Tukarama's advice or on his own initiative or on both, Shivaji almost dedicated himself to the devout but practically minded political saint-organizer, the Brahmin ascetic Ramadasa. Of the eight famous Ganapati temples, two, as we have seen, are situated in Junnar taluka not very far from the place of birth of Shivaji but none of them was either built by Shivaji or his mother or built by either Moroba or anyone else during Shivaji's lifetime. This means that Shivaji, whose patron deity was the famous Bhavani goddess of Tuljapur, simply did not take any notice of this new deity Ganapati, tried to be popularized by Moroba and other Brahmins, who, most of them, were perhaps sectarian Ganapatyas. Nay, even the temple of Ganapati in Kasba peth had to wait for its additions till some of the leading families, 'athghare' Brahmins ['Chitpavan'], 'eight-houses' as they are known,

realized the situation and as the *Gazetteer* informs us, without giving the date, effected the much-needed extensions!

That the Peshwas and Brahmins were extending Ganapati worship in area and in popular appeal is further substantiated by the temples at the famous place Jejuri which lies on the road which leads to Morgav from Poona. The old and famous temple is dedicated to Khandoba who may be described as the tutelary deity of the Marathas, at least the Marathas of the Deccan. The fairs at the place draw peoples from as far as Konkan, Khandesa and Vidarbha (Berar). There are two large tanks of water there.[10] The one built by Ahalyabai Holkar about 1770 and the other, a little higher up, built by Peshwa Bajirao II at least 30 years later. By the side of the first tank there is a Siva temple with 'Linga' and the statues of Malharrao Holkar, one of the great Maratha generals who helped to enhance the glory of the Maratha confederacy and the prestige of the earlier Peshwas, and of his three wives. Bajirao's tank being situated higher up, at the lower ground there is a spring or a well which is fed by the water sipping from it. The spring or the water at the spot is known as 'Malhartirtha', 'Malhar's sacred bathing spot', a dip in which is a necessary part of the pilgrimage to Jejuri. And what is more, at Bajirao's reservoir there is a Ganapati shrine evidently built by Bajirao II as an adjunct to his reservoir.

It is in keeping with this Brahmin hegemony of Ganapati worship that we find the compiler of the *Poona District Gazetteer*[11], describing the annual festival of Ganapati as celebrated in Poona in about 1885, stating that the idols of Ganapati "are either made in the house or bought from men, *chiefly of the Deccan Brahmin caste, whose calling is the making of Ganapatis.*"

Ganapati's advancement in prestige first among Brahmins and its bearings on his later gaining favour with the populace at large makes itself manifest in the invocatory and stray addresses to Him in the well-known work *Dasabodha* of Ramadasa who was born in 1608, the same year as Tukarama, and died in 1682. Ramadasa who was believed to be an incarnation of Rama, having been born on the birth anniversary of Rama, propagated Rama-worship and the cult of His devout attendant Maruti in Maharashtra. He established a number of

'maths' or monasteries which carried on his missionary and organizational work, of which the motto was to unite the Marathas and to liberate the country and to establish the supremacy of the Brahmanic-Hindu faith. Ramadasa's addresses and references to Ganapati are the more remarkable and afford evidence of Brahmanic glorification of Ganapati in Maharashtra because Ganapati does not appear to have been his tutelary deity. And his patron deity was certainly Rama.

Ramadasa's references to Ganapati give us the following picture of the God:[12] "Ganesa is not only Vighnahara but Mangalamurti and the bestower of all 'siddhis', 'powers' or 'success'. He is the 'gosavi', guardian of the fourteen Vidyas,[13] the sum total of systematised knowledge, the mine of all learning through whom the eight traditional chieftainesses of literature become easily amenable. To meditate on Ganesa and to praise Him is the easiest approach to Sarasvati, the Goddess of Learning. He is the full moon of learning. He it is who confers on the people both learning and intellect. He is enormous in form, magnificent and powerful. He has three eyes and appears in the dancing pose. He is besmeared with red lead. Yet He is beautiful in all ways. Even a fool meditating upon Him and invoking His help will attain proficiency in all subjects. For in the Kali Age, Chandi and Vinayaka are the operative Deities".

The last observation of Ramadasa is in Sanskrit and is current today among both the Ganapatyas, having been so quoted to me by my correspondent from Saurashtra, and also among the Devi-worshippers as I presume. Anyway Ramadasa in his particular remark proved to be prophetic. For in the age that came after him, in the 20th century, we find Vinayaka occupying a large stage in Maharashtra and Chandi in the form of Durga or Kali doing the same in the diagonally placed State of India, Bengal. Ramadasa himself was a staunch propounder of the worship of Rama; and we find Rama-lila celebration is the third publicly and collectively celebrated of Hindu festivals. Well may we look upon the Brahmin ascetic of the 17th century Maharashtra, the Maharashtra of Shivaji, as the embryonic epitome of the 20th century India.

The one-and-a half-day festival of Ganapati observed as a

domestic event since before perhaps Jnanesvara's time in Maharashtra became a festival of not only worship and prayers but also of magnificence and amusement in Poona when the Peshwas began to celebrate it in their specially built hall for Ganapati festival about 1755 A.D. Above I have brought together some evidence to show that it grew in magnificence and popular appeal throughout the later part of the 18th century. That is not to say that before the patronage of the Peshwa the festival, even though a purely domestic one, did not have a group aspect. The immersion of the clay images on the second day of the festival appears to have always been a neighbourhood and a spontaneously emerging group event, as one by one the householder with his clay image would join the others in their march towards a sheet of water, either the local pond, the local stream or river or the seashore. Chanting of some songs describing the attributes of the Deity, praising His benevolent and merciful nature and asking for boons for the family and the group have been known to be an accompaniment of all prayer and worship in Hinduism since very long. And in Maharashtra its public manifestation in temples and in procession, dates back of Jnanesvara's times and perhaps to an even earlier date.

Jnanesvara himself composed some songs to be recited at the end of a worship which are technically known as 'arti', 'distress-call', 'ending prayer for merciful help'. Many other saint-poets of that age and of the following ones composed such songs for their favourite or patron Deities and even for others, some of which have become the most current coins while others are sung only off and on. Suffice it for the present to point out to the reader the very interesting and instructive fact that the most standard and almost universal among the numerous 'arti' songs that are sung as the finale of Ganapati worship in Maharashtra, the one which begins by describing Ganapati as 'Sukhakarta, dukhaharta,' 'harbinger of happiness and dispeller of distress', was composed by Ramadasa.

And as readers will remember, it was Ramadasa who first propounded his faith in the dictum that Chandi and Vinayaka are the Gods of the present age. Perhaps, though I must point out that I have no proof nor even any plausible circumstance to suggest, such an 'arti' for Durga, Chandi or Mahishasura-

mardini already existed! We know that a number of special Sanskrit texts known as 'Durga-stotra', 'Chandi sataka', 'Chandi patha', 'Saptasati' existed and Ramadasa[15] himself observed that the last-named text was the one proper text for use in the worship of goddesses like Bhagavati.

In this matter the performance of Tukarama, the great non-Brahmin saint-poet-preacher who was not only Ramadasa's contemporary but was directly connected with Poona and its environs and perhaps had some contact with Chinchwad Devs, emphasizes the fact that Ganapati's glorification was a Brahmin business. Not only is there no invocation or homage paid to Ganapati in Tukarama's compositions, not only did he not compose any 'arti', 'distress-calling song' for Ganesa—the one composed by him for Datta, the other new Diety of Maharashtra is the one now current among Maharashtrians—but also he referred to Him as the one who stood at the tree in front of the temple of Vithoba in his native village of Dehu and also as a weird Deity who is only a consumer of sweets.[16]

A list of shrines and deities of Poona city made in the first decade of the 19th century in the time of Bajirao II, the last Peshwa, is fortunately available,[16] and its comparison with a similar one made from the records of the Municipal Corporation in 1956 by my then-research-assistant M. G. Kulkarni will present the 'godly' situation in a concrete manner.

The total number of shrines and/or objects of religious tendance in Bajirao's Poona as recorded in his diary is 395 leaving out non-Hindu ones. The principal deities who numbered more than one were as follows: Hanumanta, as Maruti was more commonly known in records and to whom Namadeva refers as Hanumya, leads with 89 images; Mahadev, Siva as now more commonly called, follows with 64; and Vithoba and Ganapati closely compete with 61 and 60 images. If we combine the Vaishnavite images, whether Rama, Vishnu, Balaji or Vyankoba or Narsoba we have 61 images distributed among the separately-noted entities as 21, 20, 16, 2 and 2. Mhasoba had fairly high number of representations as he claimed 22. All Devis, goddesses together numbered only 15. 'Munjas', the bachelor-spirits, numbered 6. Other objects of worship, the cruder and rural objects of religious tendance,

were mostly represented each by one representation only. Among such singleton representations figures the new deity Datta and that too as having been installed in the house of a householder.

The number of places of worship strictly described as temples were however very few, a surprisingly small number indeed! In the matter of having respectable abode Mahadeva led with 18 temples, Ganapati and Rama following with 11 each. Hanumanta with 8 did very well indeed and reflected the fact of his having been the favourite of rural and non-Brahmanic Maharashtra. Vithoba, in spite of Namadeva, Tukarama and the 'varkaris' or the sectarian devotees with group worship having all the elements of public appeal in it, had only 6 temples, though a better record than that of the sedate, serene and perhaps more formally dignified Deity, Vishnu, who had only 4 temples dedicated to Him.

A further index to the relative importance of the deities in Bajirao's time to the Brahminic elite of Poona is provided by the amount of gift money. Only one Ganapati, that of Kasba ward, just as one Hanumanta, that of Shanwar ward, figures among the deities that were offered the maximum amount, viz., one 'mohor' valued at Rs. 13.25, as against two Mahadevas who were the recipients of such an offering. And the most noteworthy fact is that Vithoba was not among these 'first rank' deities. Nor did any Vaishnavite image, except that in the Peshwa's own temple on the Parvati hill, receive this high honour.

In the Municipal Poona of 1956, the listing of the places of worship could supply information about only 16 of the wards and that too only of the temples. Our comparison therefore cannot be comprehensive or exhaustive. But the relative number of temples will picture the change in the 'godly' situation in Poona, I think, quite eloquently.

In our comparison I shall begin with Ganapati who is for this chapter the central figure. Ganapati has evidently made a long march in Poona from 11 temples in 1810 to 26 in 1956. Further—and I should like readers to note the fact that in Poona, temples and deities have tended to be known not only after their specific localities or the donors but also after some representational peculiarity or even after some fancied emo-

tional state of the Deity—whereas in Bajirao's Poona one Ganapati idol was made of clay and another had three trunks and were therefore known by appropriate qualifying expressions, in contemporary Poona the three Ganapatis of such distinction are known as 'Lakadi', 'wooden', 'Gundacha', 'belonging to hooligans' and 'Sarasnag', whose connotation is not clear to me.

From the viewpoint of general religious history of Poona and its people, however, the most significant facts revealed by the comparison in so far it can be strictly used, are: (1) Maruti with 92 temples to Him has appreciated the most as He had only 8 temples dedicated to Him in 1810. Only in 9 cases out of 89 images he was called Maruti, in the remaining 80 cases having been spoken of as Hanumanta. In the contemporary counting he is mostly listed as Maruti. In Bajirao's Poona only two Marutis had qualifying appellations: one was known as Dulya Hanumanta, because as the *Gazetteer* has noted "He is supposed to have shaken with grief at the mortal defeat of the Poona armies at Panipat in 1761;" another was called 'Panchamukhi,' 'five-faced' Hanumanta. Both these are there in contemporary Poona but are known as Marutis with their qualifying appellations the same as above. The great popularity of Maruti in post-Peshwa Poona is demonstrated by the fact of six other Marutis having received some titular endearing term: one is 'Parav' Maruti, another is 'Lakerya', third is 'Nivdungya,' fourth is 'Pasodya', fifth 'Bhangya' and sixth is 'Sonya', 'golden'.

(2) The Deity Datta or Dattatraya has got firmly established with 11 temples as against one private place where He received worship in Poona a hundred and fifty years ago.

(3) Bhairava, strange as it appears, did not receive any attention from Bajirao II, a fact which must be considered to represent the reality of Bhairava's absence from Poona. This is the more surprising as Bhairava is not only the God of rural Poona but is so also of rural Deccan. Whatever the explanation for Bhairava's absence in Bajirao's Poona, contemporary Municipal Poona with 14 temples for Him proclaims its affiliation with rural Poona and rural Deccan.

The Municipal list of shrines records 52 such places dedicated to one or the other 'Devi', 'goddess.' It is probable

that in listing the places of worship the Municipal authorities have included even small tabernacle-like structures, many times seen at the cross-roads by themselves or situated on the platform of a 'pipal' tree. Anyway I cannot suggest that all the recorded places should be treated as temples proper. With all this caution, however, one must concede the reality of access of faith in 'goddesses' in Poona City during the last hundred and fifty years. This fact again proclaims Poona's affiliation with rural Deccan. Of these at least 14 are different representations of the standard Devi component of the Hindu pentad viz. Durga, Mahalaxmi, Laxmi, Sri, Bhavani, Jogesvari, Ashtabhuja, Sarasvati, Devi. The others are with the number of shrines in brackets: Mariai (18), Sitala (7), Kasardevi (3), Laxmi (2), Kalubai (2). And Tukai, Yamai, Janai, Satavai and Temalaxi have each one shrine.

(4) There is great decrease in the number of shrines of the deity Mhasoba.[17] This rather evil spirit was very prominent in Bajirao's Poona. But the urbanized Poona of the 20th century has succeeded in reducing its shrines to almost the vanishing point as only 3 such were recorded. It is not impossible that the spirit may have more than its proportion of shrines in the wards for which data were not evailable!

(5) Vithoba with 54 temples marches into His rightful place, a long list of famous saint-poets, fervent preachers and earnest devotees having pleaded His cause. The same cannot be said to be the case with the other members of the Vaishnava complex taken together. Rama, Balaji, Vishnu etc. have only 47 temples. Taken together with Vithoba-temples the Vaishnavite complex has 101 temples out of a total of 350 shrines in Poona as against 98 representations in Bajirao's Poona among about 390. Rama has 19 temples. Rama owes His advance purely to the loving faith in Him of the people at large, having had no special patronage from a ruling or noble family.

On the whole Ganapati having such a large number of temples to Himself may be said to have become a member of the more respected and purely godly deities. His representations in the open in Bajirao's Poona were a visible index of his spirit origin. That Ganapati has experienced special advance in Poona is made clear by his position in the villages and the smaller towns of Maharashtra.

In my native town, Malwan, when I left school there in 1909, with a population of about 30000 there was only one very small temple of Ganapati and that too within the premises of the large Datta temple. The small Ganapati temple faced the Datta temple and looked very much like a receptacle for housing the Ganesa idol. It stood by the side of the 'pipal' tree. Even today, when Malwan's population is about 75000, I understand there is no other temple of Ganapati. In Vengurla —a town few miles to the south of Malwan, a more flourishing town in the past, having had some early European factories there—there has been only one temple of Ganapati, which stands at the entrance to the town proper at a spot where the main road coming from the harbour forks out into roads leading into the two principal sectors of the town.

I carried out in 1954-57, with the help of L. N. Chapekar and M. G. Kulkarni, an investigation into the nature of the urbanizing process in Haveli taluka at the centre of which stands Poona City.[18] One of the questions asked of a villager was an estimate of the shrines in the village and the deities to which they are dedicated. About 120 villages provided the estimates. Ganapati was reported in only 15 villages with 18 temples altogether in them; Maruti from 112 villages with 139 shrines; Bhairav from 94 with 103 shrines; Mahadeva from 80 with 103 shrines; Vithoba from 55 with 60 shrines; Vetala (spirit) from 36 without shrines; Rama from 13 with 14 shrines and Datta from 9 with one shrine in each. Vaishnavite temples dedicated to other forms of Vishnu, either as Vishnu, Laxmi-Narayana, Muralidhara or Krishna were reported from 10 villages. It will be readily appreciated how Vishnu has appealed only to the Brahmanic elite and how it is through Vithoba and to a less extent through Rama that Maharashtra has been slowly, but steadily turned towards Vaishnavite faith.

To test the general conclusion about Ganapati arising out of my study I requested my friend Bhagwanlal L. Mankad of Rajkot, a central city of Saurashtra with a population of over one lakh, to note for me all the temples in that city and the deities to whom they are dedicated. Leaving out the Jain temples and also the 'Haveli-temples' of the Vallabhite sect of Vaishnavas there are 22 temples. Of these one is a Sun-

temple kept by the devotees of Darya Pir, 'sea-spirit'. Of the remaining, two are some kind of Panchayatana temples, one being that of Siva and the other that of Krishna. In the latter case within the temple precincts of Krishna shrine of the Swaminarayana sect there are separate shrines dedicated to Siva, to Mata (Devi), to Hanuman and Ganesa. And this is the only Ganesa temple of the city. The other Panchayatana-type temple is known as that of Panchanath Mahadev. The main temple is that of Siva; there are four more shrines within the precincts which are dedicated one to Rama and three to the goddesses Mahalaxmi, Gayatri and Sitala. There are eight more temples of Mahadeva, only four of which are exclusively so. In one of them there is Vishnu too. In the remaining, in each there is a separate shrine dedicated to Rama, in one there being also a shrine for Hanuman. This association of Rama with Siva has been drawn attention to as a characteristic of one Saiva sect which manifested itself about the 12th century A.D. Hanuman's placement in the Saiva pentad of the temple of Somnath, about fifty miles to the south of Rajkot has also been pointed out. Of the 2 Hanuman temples, one is exclusively dedicated to Hanuman while within the precincts of the other there are separate shrines for Siva and Rama. Whereas there are three more temples of Rama which are exclusive to Him there is only one such for Krishna. There are four temples for Devis, Asapuri, Meladi, Bahucharaji and Mahalaxmi.

Further north than Rajkot is Jaipur in Rajasthan a mediaeval town which is today about four times the size of Rajkot but smaller than Poona. By the kindness of N. N. Vyas, I have before me a list of 336 Hindu temples of the city which are in receipt of Government grant. Leaving out about 40 shrines dedicated to different deities in small number, the remaining 296 are distributed among Krishna, Siva, Rama, Ganesa, Hanuman, Devis (various), Laxmi-Narayana and Narasimha; and their respective numbers are: 128, 55, 42, 19, 18, 13, 12 and 9. Once, the part of India in which Jaipur lies was very preponderatingly Saiva. Since the 14th century Vaishnavism and particularly Krishnaism has replaced the old sect. Ganapati is run close by Hanuman. Nineteen shrines for Ganapati in a city of Rajasthan where from came

some of the early evidence of Ganesa being considered some kind of deity is not a striking phenomenon.

If we move eastwards to Bengal we find a much more pronounced contrast. Among about 270 temples mentioned in the Gazetteers of Burdwan, Hooghly, Manbhum, Nadia and Santal Parganas districts there are only 2 which are specifically noted as dedicated to Ganesa. Nadia, the district of Brahminic stronghold, had one and the other belonged to the complex of temples known as Deoghar-Baidyanath in the Santal Paraganas. The latter is stated to have been built in 1762 A.D.

What a contrast to Poona! It would be realised that Ganapati has a special currency in Poona.

There is another approach to the appraisal of Ganapati popularity with Maharashtrians and the particular classes among which He finds favour. First, there is the annual festival worship of Ganesa. I have elsewhere pointed out that with non-Brahmin rural population of the Deccan at least for over the last century and a half the worship of Gauri generally falling on the 3rd day of the Ganapati festival is by far the more widespread and important festival.[19] My investigation in Haveli taluka already referred to reveals that not more than five per cent of the population observed the annual Ganapati festival, installing the image and then discharging it in due time. To go to Poona to 'see' Ganapatis is one of the looked-for annual occasions.

Secondly, we may ascertain the currency of Ganapati as a component of the Deity complex set up for household daily or occasional worship as the case may be. As is made clear in my *After a Century and a Quarter,* in the village of Lonikand which is about 12 to 13 miles north-east of Poona city the household deities of the populace do not include Ganapati among them.

Thirdly, a Hindu family has generally a tutelary or patron deity, 'kula daivata' 'family-deity' as it is called, that is believed to be watching over the interests of the family and its members. The family-God is occasionally or annually appealed to for protection and is invoked at the beginning of any undertaking. Invitations for marriage and other functions are always headed by a homage to Him in His name. As is

again clear from the book mentioned, in Lonikand among the family-deities of the people Ganapati is conspicuous by His absence.

Let me now turn to the evidence from a Brahminized village of Kolaba district. This evidence has been made possible by the enthusiasm and selfless work of a band of workers —mostly Brahmins—from the old village of Nagav, which is a few miles away from Revas on the other side of the Bombay harbour and which may be called a commuting week-end suburb of Bombay. It has had a fairly large Brahmin—the bulk of it Chitpavan Brahmins—population. In 1951—the data used here refer to the year 1957—the Brahmin household formed about one-fifth of the total. Another feature of population-composition, the presence of one predominant agricultural caste, though present bears a different aspect. First, the caste is known as Chaukalsi-mali, which in its very name proclaims a variety of interests and skills as its heritage; second, the number of households is only double that of the Brahmin; and third, the Brahmins of the village themselves are good horticulturists and many of them carry on agriculture with the help of hired servants. The third feature of Nagav which differentiates it from Lonikand or any other village of Haveli taluka is that the Maratha element is small; instead we have Bhandaris and Agris.

To begin with the annual Ganapati festival I find the prevalence of it to be much wider in this village than was met with in Lonikand, confining my observantions to the four castes of Agri, Bhandari, Brahmin and Chaukalsi-mali from which more than 20 households each have reported. The separate observance of this worship depends on familial relations subsisting between the divided branches of a joint or extended family and on the enthusiasm as well as the economic position of the new units of households. In calculating the prevalence of this worship only those cases of it which are separate units are taken into account, the households reporting observance at the eldest branch of the old family-unit having been omitted. The total number of households reporting the observance or non-observance in this fashion in the five castes are: Chaukalshimali, 279; Brahmin, 140; Bhandari, 57; Maratha, 42; and Agri, 29. The percentage of observance of the festival

among them is 72, 77, 79, 81 and 96 respectively. The situation among the remaining five castes of Burud, Daivajna, Nhavi, Panchala-Sutar and Tvashta-Kasar is not radically different, though the small number of cases of each precludes percentage from being computed for comparison. We may conclude that in the highly Brahmanic village of Nagav with semi-skilled castes also in fair number the annual festival of Ganapati is very widely observed among all castes.

Statement I presents in a tabular form the most relevant details regarding the nature and form of the Deity among the householders of Nagav who is in daily worship in the household. I have drawn upon the data for the five principal castes of the village which among themselves account for nearly 85 per cent of the village-households. The total number of households of the five castes Agri, Bhandari, Brahmin, Chaukalshimali and Maratha that have supplied information as to whether they have household deities in worship or not is 599. Less than 51 per cent of the households reporting on this aspect of their religious life state that they have household deities in worship, the rest having none. Among household deities for daily worship Ganapati along with or without any other Deity forms a little over 27 percent.

In this feature of Ganapati being the principal Deity in household worship the Chaukalshimali caste tops the list, about 37 per cent of the householders who keep household-deities having Ganapati. The Brahmins stand only second to the Chaukalshimalis, with about 22.5 per cent of their householders with household deities having Ganapati. But the situation is even not so close in reality if we consider Ganapati as the exclusive Deity. For all the Brahmins except one householder, combine with Ganapati one or other of the five deities of the pentad.

On the other hand, the situation becomes entirely different if we take into account the worship of the pentad. It is seen that the pentad in worship figures only among the Brahmins so that in reality pentadic worship ought to be described as Brahmanic and not merely Hindu. Hindus in general have not accepted the pentad which seems to have been the Brahmin's synthesis, which may or may not have been the consequence of his attempt at unification of the five

STATEMENT I*

Caste	Number of households Reporting: Numerator gives those having Deities	Number of Households with the Household Deity in Daily Worship									
		Ganapati	Siva	Vishnu	Devi	Kula-daivata	Datta	Vithoba	Khandoba	Maruti	Pancha-yatana
AGRI	9/32	1	x	x	1	3	3	1	x	x	x
BHANDARI	27/66	5	1	6	6	5	2	x	x	x	x
BRAHMIN	138/149	31	x	5	2	x	7	x	x	x	93
CHAUKALSHI-MALI	111/307	41	7	22	25	25	29	20	7	3	x
MARATHA	18/45	3	2	6	4	4	3	1	x	3	x
		81	10	39	38	37	44	22	7	6	93

* (a) Ganapati—whether alone or with other deities.

(b) Vishnu includes Rama and Krishna.

(c) Bhandari—one household reported other deities than those listed.

(d) For Chaukalshimali and Maratha the columns—totals are not equal to the reporting household totals as the various Deities reported could not be singled out, as in the cases of Agri, Bhandari and Brahmin, as principal.

schools of 'godly' affiliation that had developed within Hindu society between the 5th or the 6th century and the 10th to 12th century of the Christian era. But certainly the religious or the philosophical theory of the unity of God, various Deities, mythological or popular, being considered to be the manifestations and variant forms of the one God must have fostered the idea of and encouraged the attempt at the pentadic synthesis.

The pentad is variously designated as Siva-pentad, Vishnu-pentad, Devi-pentad, Ganesa-pentad and Surya-pentad according as the central Deity of the pentad is either Siva, Vishnu, Devi, Ganesa or Surya, the last being very rare, almost unknown today. All the Brahmin households which report pentad as the Deity in worship can therefore be considered as those with Ganesa as one of the deities in daily worship. Considered this way the Brahmin caste leads in the daily Ganesa-worship by an overwhelmingly large majority, the percentage of Brahmin householders having Ganapati in daily worship, though not exclusively, forming nearly 90 among those that have household deities. It should be noted that among the various deities or complex of deities that are prescribed to be worshipped daily in the house as a part of his 'fifth' technique of devotion, Ramadasa, who details altogether nine devotional techniques, recommended the worship of 'Panchayatana' ('Panchayetna' as it appears in the published text of *Dasabodha*).[20] Among all the household-deities-worshipping householders of Nagav the worshippers of 'Panchayatana' or the 'pentad' form 24.5 per cent which compared with the extent of the worship of Ganapati, whether singly or with other deities but not forming a component of the pentad, is fairly high. Ganapati as household Deity of daily worship is kept by a little over 26 per cent of the householders of Nagav who have reported keeping of household deities for daily worship. As against this and the previous percentage of Ganapati and of 'pentad' worshippers, those who keep Vithoba and some form of Vishnu not as a member of the complex pentad but separately, formed only 16 per cent among the keepers of deities for daily worship.

We may conclude, from this study of the 'godly' distribution in the Brahmanic and Brahmin-influenced village of

Nagav near Alibag and its marked contrast to the 'godly' picture presented by the Maratha-Mali village of Lonikand near Poona, that the worship of Ganesa not only at annual festival but in daily household routine is influenced and even fostered by the example and precept of Brahmins.

Worship at the annual festival, if any, of a deity may be adopted by a person as the result of a vow or because of his acceptance of the deity as a 'chosen deity', 'Ishtadevata' as the Hindu religious terminology would express the concept. Setting up of the image of a particular deity as a household-deity may, too, be similarly motivated. Both these forms of worship are ended by the person with the elaborate procedure laid down for such leave-taking, 'udyapana' as it is technically called. It then becomes what is known as 'kuladaivata', 'family deity' or tutelary deity. 'Family deity' implies permanent footing and is indicative of the stable importance of the God so resorted to.

In Statement II, I present the data about 'Family-deity' of ten castes of Nagav village. It is seen that out of the 626 families reporting, only 12 have Ganapati as the family deity. A little less than 44 per cent have returned 'Kulaswami' as the family-deity, which means that no particular deity forms the family-God but only the family-spirit in general is personified and paid reverence. The deity favoured as the family-God is Devi or some form of Goddess, who in this generalised form is also a member of the standard pentad. A large number of Goddesses are known and in Maharashtra as many as sixty different forms are known, beginning with the classical Durga, Parvati, Kali, Chandi, Bhavani, Mahalaxmi etc. to Jakhmata, Firangai, Vadjai, Bharangi, and such others. Bahiri, the third favourite is the same as Bhairav, a form of Siva much favoured in the Deccan.[21]

Of the eleven cases of Ganapati being the tutelary deity 9 are from among the Brahmins. This proportion can hardly be said to be representative for the Brahmins, especially as a very large proportion of the Brahmins of Nagav are Chitpavan Brahmins. N. G. Chapekar, the nonagenarian Chitpavan Brahmin who is a versatile litterateur, found that in a random collection of invitation cards for marriage and such other functions issued by Chitpavan Brahmins as many as 75 per cent

STATEMENT II*

NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH FAMILY DEITY

CASTE	Number of households giving information	Vinayaka, Ganapati, Chinta-mani	Siva	Vishnu	Devi	Bahiri	Khandoba	Vithoba	Vaghbapa	Kulaswami
Agri	30	x	x	x	2	1	2	x	x	24
Bhandari	66	1	x	x	11	x	7	x	x	38
Brahmin	156	9	9	23	110	x	x	x	x	4
Burud	9	x	x	x	x	x	1	x	x	8
Chaukalshimali	301	2	13	x	17	57	39	x	2	169
Daivajna	6	x	x	x	4	x	x	x	x	2
Maratha	46	x	x	x	8	3	x	3	4	25
Nhavi	6	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	1
Panchala-Sutar	3	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	2
Tvashta-Kasar	3	x	x	x	2	x	x	x	x	1
	626	12	22	23	154	61	49	3	6	274

* Other Deities than those listed having been recorded in less than three cases are omitted. This explains the discrepancy in the totals.

had Ganapati invocation at the top. The fact indicates that about 75 per cent of the Chitpavan families consider Ganapati as their family-deity or that about that percentage of them have adopted the Deity as the chosen one. We may conclude that Ganapati is fairly on the way to constitute 'the' tutelary Deity of the Chitpavan Brahmins. Chapekar remarks that Gajanana, that is the name by which Ganapati is invoked in these cards, has tended to cause the people to forget their original family-deity.[22]

Brahmins round about Poona have thus played the most important role in raising the status of and in gaining popular esteem for Ganapati in Maharashtra during more than six centuries. In the last hundred years, the most noteworthy upliftment in His career, being altogether a new departure in the religious history of the Hindus, occurred in 1893.[23] It was Poona and the Chitpavan Brahmins that sponsored the cause of Ganapati. Ganapati, though worshipped in daily household practice by some other castes than the Chitpavan Brahmins and their like and in annual worship much more so by a number of other castes, is attested as almost a tutelary deity very largely only among the Chitpavan Brahmins.

The rise of Ganapati to the political arena and His being the first Hindu Deity to be the focus of group-installation and group-worship by neighbourhoods are events effected in Poona and at the hands of a political leader who was a Chitpavan Brahmin. Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak was the leader who, in his great endevaur to muster the popular feelings for the political liberation of India did not lose sight of the Hindu section of the population and the need for the integration of its various sub-sections that had been straying away wholly or partially from its rather scattered and unfenced field. And in Poona there were at least two religious functions celebrated in more or less the manner indicated above as the speciality of the newer development in Ganapati worship.

One of these festivals was Hindu and that was the Cobra's fifth which in Poona took the form of processional festival being in the rural areas, too, as pointed out elsewhere,[24] an important occasion for dance and group merriment. It was completely put into the shade by the celebration of the other festival which was the Muslim festival of Mohurram. In con-

nection with this funeral and therefore mourningful festival a funeral car to be taken in procession is set up; and for a number of days before the last day of the 'grand' procession, conducted to the accompaniment of acrobatics, mimicry and religious 'trance' atmosphere, every night some meet takes place at the site of the installation. Hindus not only used to take very active, vigorous and prominent part in the festival but a number of them used to set up these 'tabuts' or 'tazias' as they are called, and used to carry them for immersion along with the others.[25] The grandeur and evocative nature of the festival, particularly the procession of the 'tazias', which has not been current in the Island-City of Bombay since 1907 or 1908 (?), were witnessed by the writer in Bombay on the last of its occasion.

The year 1893 saw the first Hindu-Muslim riot on Bombay-side under the regime of the British. It took place in the then Muslim State of Junagadh temporarily under direct British Indian administration. In August of the same year the riots of Prabhas Pattana near Veraval had their echoes in Bombay city. And at the Cobra-fifth festival, a few days after the Bombay riots, at Poona there were thick rumours of imminent riots. The authorities having kept the most up-to-date arrangements of police and military force in readiness, however, nothing happened. It was in the September of the year that the new form of Ganapati festival was begun in Poona. It was the consequence of a combination of circumstances, the rise of this festival focussing the sentiments of the Hindus on their festival as a group-event, giving them opportunities for social and pleasurable activities, and the truculence and manifestation of superiority complex of the Muslims that led in the next year, 1894, to the great diminution of the number of Hindu 'tabuts' and to some increase in the number of Muslim ones in Poona. The festival celebrated in 1895 reflected the successful weaning off of the Hindu mind from the Muslim function of Mohurrum and the consequent accession of sentiment for the Hindu festival of Ganapati in Poona. But what is even more significant as a feature of the celebration of 1894 is the fact that not only Bombay but many other cities, some of them even from outside Maharashtra, like Hubli, Dharwad and Bezwada, started the new function. It

strengthened the antagonistic reaction among the Muslims which in its turn inclined the Hindus to endorse it as their own and the only group-festival. This vogue got such currency that Tilak wrote two leaders on "The significance of National Festivals and the Duty of the Educated Public about Them" in two consecutive issues of his powerful and militant Marathi weekly *Kesari* in September 1896.[26] The annual Ganapati festival was dubbed a national festival and Ganapati by implication was looked upon as the Hindu national Deity.

From the inception of the goup-installation of Ganapati image and common celebration of the festival it turned out to be a ten-days festival. The fourteenth day of the lunar month being the 'Ananta's fourteenth', a festival and fast which is only specific and peculiar to certain Brahmanic families, it turned out to be the fittest day for immersion of Ganapati images worshipped in common under the new mode. From the start, with the political ends in view the programmes arranged contained elaboration on modern lines of some of the traditional accompaniments of such festivals, along with the brand new item of lectures. Under the former category come what are known as 'meles', 'singer-troupes'; and they competed with their group-recitations composed for the occasion, bringing in episodes and incidents calculated to tighten up the then current political situation and by implication, to the uttermost limit within the rigid and sharp control of prohibitory laws, to inspire the audience with the urge to engage in some liberatory activity.

The movement did work as a mode of political propaganda, though the festival with all the noise about it has remained confined to a few cities of Maharashtra and is observed sporadically in some places in Mysore (Karnatak), Andhradesa and Orissa. Even in Maharashtra the spectacle presented by Bombay and Poona should not be considered as representative of its towns and villages. Even in the 'home country' of Ganapati, Haveli taluka, at whose centre stands Poona city, this group-festival is observed in only a few villages, not even ten. And as pointed out elsewhere in such a village as Lonikand even it is observed as a festival of the local school.

With all the persistent and continual attempt at glorification of Ganapati, the group-festival has remained confined to a

few centres in Maharashtra, the educated people tending to observe it as a group-event for certain schools. In this new connection of Ganapati with schools it would be wrong to see the general acceptance of Ganapati as a Deity presiding over Learning as Ramadasa, the 17th century political and ascetic saint-poet of Maharashtra, pictured Him and as many students of Hindu religious institutions, ideas and practices have asserted. The simple yet utter refutation of such an opinion about the acceptance of Ganesa is provided by the fact that neither in Maharashtra nor anywhere else in India is Ganesa worshipped when a child is either begun to be taught the alphabet or is sent to school. Nor again this new venture is begun on Ganesa's 'fourth'. But invariably the beginning of learning by a child is arranged on the Saraswati-worship day in the lunar month of Aswin. In the alternative, the beginning of schooling was made with the worship of a stylized picture of Saraswati drawn on the slate. And at least in Maharashtra, almost till the inauguration of the Secular State of post-independence era, annually during the Dasara festival of Aswin, within which falls the Saraswati-worship day, primary school children used to go to school on the 10th day, though it was a holiday for schools and all, just to worship the stylized picture of the Goddess drawn on their slates. When in the twenties of this century, the Calcutta University desired to set up a symbol of the presiding deity of learning it chose Saraswati, and it was Her image that was to have been installed and not that of Ganapati.

Ganesa or Ganapati is in reality not accepted as a God of Learning, and his worship, too, is mostly confined to Brahmins and some Brahmin-influenced castes.

9

VISHNU: THE UNIVERSAL GOD IN THE MAKING

Vishnu as a member of the pentad in Hindu worship is one among the five and as such is as great or as small as any of the remaining four. In popular worship however, Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesa, the old triad, which is still relevant in common belief, is reduced to the diad of Vishnu and Siva owing to Brahma's having ceased to receive any worship for many centuries. Vishnu thus figures as one of the two Great Ones. In actual ritual and even in belief and for appeal Vishnu stands out as the one God who may be looked upon as the Supreme God to the extent that such a concept is compatible with the theory of incarnatory nature of God and the immanence of God-head which are two of the cardinal doctrines of Hinduism.

As R. G. Bhandarkar[1] stated half a century ago, (1) Every Sraddha-rite—funeral oblations to manes—is wound up with the expression "May Janardena-Vasudeva, who is a form of the ancestors, or the father, grandfather and great-grandfather, be satisfied by this act;" (2) The twentyfour names of the standard twentyfour forms of Vishnu are repeated, each with the obeisance-expression added, "at the beginning of every ceremony we perform at the present day"; and as I should add, (3) At the beginning of every religious act the declaratory formula with which it begins contains the expression that the age exists by the order of Vishnu or Maha Vishnu and the wish is expressed at the end that the performance of the act may please Vishnu or Janardana. (4) The last prayers at the time of concluding the worship of any installed image end with the formula "..... whatever I do, I offer it to Great Narayana," every act of worship thus being conceived as worship of the Supreme Deity Narayana.* (5) At every Sandhya adoration—the morning and evening prayers which all twice-born persons, after their thread-ceremony is performed, have

to offer throughout life—which begins with the recital of the standard twentyfour names of Vishnu ends with the formula dedicating the whole adoration to Krishna.

In most cosmological accounts of the Hindus the creation is preceded by the pre-existence of the Supreme Creator who is called Narayana.[2] R. G. Bhandarkar traced the origin of such myths to certain texts in the oldest of the Vedas, the *Rigveda,* though the appellation Narayana is not traceable in literature earlier than the *Satapatha Brahmana* which, though one of the latest of the Vedic works, is pre-Upanishadic. His synopsis of the Vedic position vis-a-vis Narayana is: "..... the unborn corresponds to Narayana from whose navel Brahma sprang. In this embryo all the gods, it is said, found themselves This corresponds to the Naras, men or gods, whose goal or resting place was Narayana, so that this confirms the identity between Brahma and Narayana mentioned by Manu and some of the Puranas. Narayana, therefore, who, by the other authorities cited above, is considered prior to Brahmadeva and to the Swayambhu of Manu, is another person and has a cosmic character and is not a historical or mythological individual. This idea of Narayana was developed in the period of the later Brahmanas and Aranyakas," by the end of which almost all the attributes of the Supreme Soul came to be ascribed to Narayana.[3]

The *Satapatha Brahmana* and the *Taittiriya Aranyaka* narrate a story which tries to explain the attainment of the Supreme Godhood by Vishnu.[4] Vishnu from being one of the many Vedic deities had thus been raised to the position of Supreme God or Supreme Soul by about the middle of the 9th century B.C. Perhaps Narayana was conceived in the same spirit even a little before that. In the *Katha Upanishad,* before the 6th century B.C., already "the progress of the human soul is compared to a journey and the end of the path which he traverses is called the highest place of Vishnu. This is the final goal and the abode of eternal bliss."[5]

Already before 500 B.C. the *Baudhayana Grihyasutra* (I, 11, 7) includes Narayana among the twelve names of Vishnu in a rite of oblation to Vishnu who is significantly enough represented and treated as the God presiding over the human embryo. Vishnu and Narayana were apparently

equated even before 500 B.C. The *Vayu purana* in one place (I, 24, 9-48; 25) confirms this identification without further bringing in Vasudeva Krishna; but the *Mahabharata* devotes a whole section (XII, 341) to insist on the identification of Narayana with both Vishnu and Vasudeva Krishna. The *Baudhayana Grihyasutra* including as it does the names, Govinda, Madhava, Hrisikesa and Damodara among the twelve names of Vishnu supports the view that the tripartite identification, Narayana-Vishnu-Krishna, was already achieved before 500 B.C. In so far as it even includes the name Padmanabha, 'lotus-navelled one', among these twelve names, Narayana was also conceived even before 500 B.C. in His what is popularly known as the 'Seshasayi', 'lying on the serpent,' form.

In the serpent-reclining form of Vishnu, the god Brahma, according to mythology, seeking guidance for His work and exploring Vishnu-Narayana's extent, comes out from a lotus emerging from the navel of Vishnu-Narayana. The Seshasayi form of Vishnu subordinated one member of the Trinity to Vishnu. In leaving the diad of Siva and Vishnu this feature exalted Vishnu above Siva as the originator of Brahma and as the Creator of the Universe. The function of upholding it has always been attributed to Him in the Trinity concept. As the destructive function is not likely to be looked upon with favour by humanity, Siva whose mythological function has been destruction has been left without any significant role, leaving Vishnu as almost the Universal God.

Kalidasa, the great poet and dramatist of the classical age who has held sway over the minds of elite for over 1500 years, in his pseudo-epic on the house of Raghu, has delineated in soft and endearing terms a pen-picture of this form of Vishnu. Gods led by Brahma "approached Hari, the Primaeval Man, sitting [slightly reclining] on the folds of the great serpent in the ocean, who had just come out of his Yoga trance with one of his legs lying on the lap of [His consort] Laxmi . . . . . "[6] In the God's prayers to Him Kalidasa uses words which not only identify Him with the Prime Cause of the Universe but also represent Him as the Unified Trinity of Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesa. Appropriately Kalidasa makes the gods speak of His willingness to take birth on earth, to achieve great deeds

and to kill enemies of gods, though He is above birth, desires and hate. Hari, Seshasayin, promises the gods that He will take birth as the son of the Ikshvaku king Dasaratha and do the needful. As Brahma was among the gods who waited on Hari, Seshasayin, Kalidasa has refrained in his description of the God, which, in other respects down to the minutest detail of the dress, is complete, from alluding to the lotus-stalk issuing out of the God's navel with Brahma seated on the lotus. To make up for this omission, that was imposed on him by the occasion, later on (XIII, 15-6) he makes Rama himself describe this God to Sita in connection with the description of the sea. In it he mentions the lotus-stalk issuing out of the navel of Vishnu—that is the name he uses in that connection. Rama tells Sita that the God is prayed to by Brahma seated in the lotus of the lotus-stalk issuing from Vishnu's navel, though the God most often lies in the Yogic trance suited to the end of an aeon.

J. N. Banerjea considers this form of Vishnu-Narayana to be "a mythological elaboration of" the ideas in the 5th and the 6th verses of the 82nd hymn of the 10th book of the *Rigveda*. The elaboration must have taken place about a thousand years before Kalidasa. For Vishnu's appellation of Padmanabha, lotus-navelled one, which occurs in the *Baudhayana Grihya-sutra* presupposes the form.

The earliest invocation to Vishnu—not to Vasudeva, Krishna, Kesava or Sankarshana—occurs in a Samskrit inscription dated 404 A.D. and discovered at Mandasor in Gwalior district.[7] Curiously it is an "adoration to the thousand-headed Purusha [Vishnu] accustomed to sleep on the bed of the waters of the four seas." The reference is clearly to the Seshasayin form of Vishnu-Narayana without specific mention of the navel-lotus and Brahma seated on it. What is further interesting is the fact that at the end of the inscription there is a supplication to "Vasudeva, the unborn Lord, the unfathomable abode of the universe." This then may be taken to be the first historical recognition of Narayana-Vishnu-Vasudeva identification. Though a temple of Narayana is mentioned as having existed at Gunapadeya in Kondakur taluka of Guntur district in an inscription assigned to the 4th century A.D., the earliest Vishnu temple is perhaps that

at Tigawa in Jabalpur district. The earliest mention of one is of course that in the Ramayana, where we are informed that Rama on the night previous to his projected coronation sacrificed to Vishnu in the temple attached to the palace.[8]

Worship of Vasudeva has been current since perhaps the 4th or even the 5th century B.C. in the western parts of U.P. and Malwa and in Maharashtra from about the 1st or the 2nd century B.C.[9]

The earliest extant representation of the Seshasayi-form of Vishnu is provided by the terra-cotta relief from the ruined brick-temple at Bhitargav in Kanpur district, assigned to the 5th century A.D. Thereafter the form caught the imagination of the elite followers of Vaishnavism or the religious-minded elite and the sculptors of the age gave it one of the finest sculptural representations of a sublime and blissful configuration of the Deity and Divine personages. The relief on the half-ruined temple at Devgadha in Lalitpur district, Jhansi division, generally ascribed to the 6th century A.D. but dated a little earlier by M. S. Vats,[10] is a masterpiece of blissful peace and profound contemplation under complete relaxation. The red-stone relief at Badami near Dharwad comes next in date being ascribed to the last quarter of the sixth century A.D.[11] In appeal, too, it is perhaps second to the one at Devgadh. The sinuous figure of the form at Aihole in Bijapur, reproduced by G. Rao and G. H. Khare,[12] belongs to the end of the 8th century.[13] It is too slender for my taste to evoke the feelings which the Devgadh relief does. The Pallava representation of this form of Vishnu in the temple at Mahabalipuram is ascribable to about the middle of the 8th century but is not so engrossing. It is reproduced by T. N. Srinivasan in plate 25 of his book *A Handbook of South Indian Images.*

Kalidasa's description of Seshasayi Narayana in the context in which he made it strikes me as very peculiar and special. For the *Ramayana* of Valmiki, the supposed original for Rama's life, does not refer to this form of Vishnu. On the other hand, it merely states that the gods led by Brahma praising Vishnu who was riding his mount 'garuda', eagle, requested Him to take birth in the family of Dasaratha, dividing Himself into four parts, as they had assigned to Him the task of killing Ravana who, owing to the boon conferred on him,

could not be killed by the gods (I, 50, 14-26).

Tulasidasa (1531-1622 A.D.) whose poem on Rama's life, entitled *Ramacharitamanasa*, written in Hindi, has enthralled the minds of hundreds of thousands of Indians for more than three centuries, goes a step further in harmony with the religious belief of the time and states that the earth incarnate along with the gods consulting Brahma decided to approach mentally Lord Vishnu, the kind friend and reliever, and to supplicate Him. For, being immanent, He does not require to be visited in person. As soon as they did this and chanted some songs in praise of the Lord, they heard a voice comforting them and promising to take birth in the family of Dasaratha to do the needful (I, pp. 169-173 of Jwalaprasad Misra's edition.)

To resume our study of Vishnu's position in popular estimate I should stress the number of times that he figures in mythology as called upon, on his own inclination or on request, to kill demons and free both gods and men—in His case more often men and Indian Dharma or the socio-ethical order—from their clutches. It is in the form of Seshasayin, 'spread-out-on-cobra' form, that the two demons Madhu and Kaitabha, who appear unconnected with any of the mythologically known demons, emerged from either the sweat of the God's body or from His ears and threatened to devour Brahma who in His fright ran to Seshasayin down in the ocean. Seshasayin comforted Brahma and after a good deal of trouble managed to kill them.[14]

This demon-removing activity of Vishnu, unlike the sporadic exploits of Siva, Durga and Skanda in this line, is represented both in the *Bhagavadgita*, the *Vayupurana* and the *Harivamsa*, that is in texts compiled between 200 B.C. to 300 A.D., and is very popular both with the elite and the common folk, as a normal duty of Vishnu, the beneficent preserver of the world. To uphold the socio-ethical order and to free mankind from extraordinary perils from demoniac visitations or human malefactors God Vishnu incarnates Himself from age to age as need arises. Witness, for example, the remarks of Kalhana, the deeply learned yet highly emotional historian of Kashmir, who wrote his *Rajatarangini* in A.D. 1150. Eulogising the work of the famous king, almost

mythical, Vikramaditya, he states that by the great deed of exterminating the Sakas, the Scythian invaders of India during the first few centuries of the Christian era, he lightened the task of God Vishnu who is scheduled to incarnate Himself for the task of destroying the Mlechhas or foreigners (III, 128).

The rise of Vishnu worship and its rapid and tremendous progress in the country first in the part east of Allahabad-Bhopal-Nasik line and much later in the western parts, where the cult of the Vrishni heroes Samkarshana and Vasudeva was struggling with Saivism for its very existence, are not an accident. They are a fulfilment of the standing assurance contained in the incarnation-theory and a portent for future.

The Guptas, an ethnic group probably from north-western parts of Bengal, appeared on the Indian political scene when the country, at least its western and northern parts, lying to the west of Prayaga in U.P. and Bhopal in Madhya Pradesa, had been ruled over three centuries by foreign settlers who had got Hinduized. These foreigners when they were not Buddhists, more often professed adherence to Saiva faith than Vaishnava. And it is noteworthy that it was in the reign of the fifth monarch of the Gupta line, the first to impress the people as marked out for Indian dominion, Vikramaditya of tradition, that the boar-incarnation of Vishnu was sculpturerd in the cave at Udayagiri near Bhilsa and Bhopal, in Madhya Pradesa. Vishnu, in that incarnation, according to the *Vayupurana,* that is, the first incarnation of Vishnu, uplifted the earth which was sinking. Boar-Vishnu stands for relieving strength, for freeing the bond ones from thraldom and degradation. As such He is very meaningfully represented as a 'colossal' two-armed figure lifting up the submerged earth with His tusk. And it was He who we may infer from this little evidence that was looked up to as the patron-Deity![15]

The Gupta patronage of Boar-Vishnu must have been very much more active than may be inferred from one sculptural representation of the Deity. For at nearby Eran, a feudatory of the Guptas whose elder brother and three ancestors and himself bore names ending in Vishnu, even when the reins of suzereignty had passed on to the foreign invaders known as Hunas, erected a stone-temple to this Deity, describing Him as Narayana who is bent on the welfare of the

world. The invocation at the beginning of this inscription, dated between 500-515 A.D., bears out the point of view here put forward regarding the connection between the climate of an age and the form of the Deity favoured by the elite and the common folk. It reads:[16] "Victorious stands God Boar-form, who is the pillar of the great mansion in the form of the three worlds, who in the act of uplifting the earth caused the mountains to totter with the blows of his hard snout."

Another occasion of Hindu resurgence, and this time in South India, came when the Muslims began to conquer and occupy that part of India. And the banner of resurgent Hinduism was lifted up by the Vijayanagar monarchs in the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries. Significantly enough the emblem that they adopted was Vishnu's Varaha Boar-incarnation. Their adoption of the form was so complete that their gold coins were called 'Varahas.'

Further support to my view-point that the Gupta monarchs, imbued with the symbolism of Vaishnava theology, adopted the specific Vaishnava Deities as patron Gods and popularized them with their people, the intellectuals helping the process with their mythological lore, poetic fervour and dramatic art, is provided by the emblems which they adopted for their coinage which supplanted that of the previous and foreign rulers. The figure of 'garuda', 'eagle,' the mount of Vishnu, the 'god' that stole away nectar for the gods, appears on their coins. The most interesting and instructive relic, however, is a terracotta seal of Kumaragupta I (414-456 A.D.) discovered at Nalanda. On it is a fine and plump representation of a human-headed 'garuda' with head-hair dressed in fine curls as we see them on the heads of some Gupta monarchs as they figure on their coins. The wings are finely curved and outstretched evidently to convey the feeling of prowess.[17]

It must be much more than an accident that the Devgadh temple of the 6th century A.D., has the fine sculptural representation of a significant relief-episode, rarely represented in mediaeval art but highly relished and carefully cherished by the pious and the devout. It is the liberation of the king of elephants from the death-dealing coils of a huge water-snake when the former had descended into a lake to sport in water. The animal, a devotee of Vishnu, prayed to

Him in its agonising moments. Vishnu, a finely chiselled figure, is shown as having arrived at the spot on the back of His powerful-looking mount Garuda. Release from the clutches of fell enemies, or in general from distress, is the symbolism splendidly conveyed to the mind of the spectator and much more so to that of a person knowing the mythology about it. Vishnu-Narayana, Boar-Vishnu and Karivarada Vishnu of Gajendramoksha, as the episode is called in Samskrit, all typify determined and powerful endeavour of relief, release or liberation under God's blessings.

In actual fact we have no direct information about the sectarian affiliation of the first four Gupta kings. It is possible, however, to conclude from the fact that "garuda", eagle, or/and 'Lakshmi', Vishnu's consort and goddess of wealth, appear on the Gupta coinage[18] from time to time, they were some kind of Vaishnavas, though never bigoted. Chandragupta I, the third monarch of the family and the first to call himself overlord, perhaps had the lion-riding Durga Goddess as his patron deity; for her effigy appears on the reverse of his coins.[19] The next great monarch the victor Samudragupta performed the Vedic horse-sacrifice and proclaimed his revivalist fervour by issuing gold coins celebrating the event. His son Chandragupta II, the greatest monarch of the family, was the first to proclaim his Vaishnava faith and is described as a 'paramabhagavata', a great Vaishnava. He styled himself Vikramaditya. He it was who was Kalidasa's patron. His son and grandson were named, however, after the martial God of the time, the general of the armies of gods, Skanda. Kumaragupta, the son of Chandragupta II, is also described as a great Vaishnava. He too performed the horse-sacrifice and struck gold coins in commemoration of it. His son was Skandagupta who, too, is described as a great Vaishnava. His death occurred in 467 A.D. In his Junagadh inscription of the years 455-458 A.D. the invocation to Vishnu reads: "Vishnu, the great victor who dispels distress, who wrested away from Bali for the gods Sri whom Bali had captured and kept for sometime, and who is the permanent abode of lotus-born Laxmi, is victorious." Here is a clear reference to the great striding incarnation of Vishnu known as Vamana or Trivikrama and its specific relief-exploit.

The white Huns who molested the Roman Empire in the first half of the 5th century A.D. were also knocking at the innner gates of India in the time of Kumaragupta and Skandagupta. Skandagupta having won a great victory, which only later history proved to be a short-lived one, celebrated it evidently with the erection of a statue of Vishnu at Bhitari, near Sayyidpur in Gazipur district of U.P. In the attendent inscription he likens himself to Krishna, who when he had killed his enemies ran to his mother Devaki.[20]

The resurgence of Brahmanism which began about the 2nd century B.C. in Central, Western and South-western India was in part a revival of Vedic religion of sacrifice. By about the 2nd century A.D. it had taken on a different aspect and may be described as the transformation of Bhagavatism into vigorous Vaishnavism. The argument substantiating my contention that Vishnu, the incarnatory Deity *par excellence,* has been the Supreme God in the making may now be concluded with one more point before proceeding further with the story of the various forms of Vishnu becoming current for worship. And that is, that Vishnu represents the culmination of Vedic religion in an age when sacrificial sessions and sacrifice as a group-performance were neither possible nor countenanced. For Vishnu was early identified with sacrifice, the identification being rendered easy and natural owing to the primaeval sacrifice having been that of Purusha Himself. Vishnu, too, as Narayana was Purusha. That is why Vishnu is also known as Yajna-Narayana.[21] Vishnu then represented Sacrifice itself. As the core of Vedic religion Vishnu naturally claims and is tending to get recognition from the elite as the Supreme God.

An early author of the classical upheaval was Bhasa, the dramatist. He wrote thirteen dramas. Of these in five he developed the story of the Pandavas. The story has always been looked upon as an urge to fight injustice and evil enemies. Two others specifically deal with Krishna's life, boyhood and his special diplomatic mission to the Kauravas to plead for reason to supplant prejudice and obstinacy. In both, the intentions to proclaim the Divinty of Krishna is quite manifest. In two other dramas the life of Rama is depicted, his boyhood and his final coronation. Thus the episodes which

bring out Rama's superior qualities as an archer and a warrior are availed of. In the latter of the two dramas Rama's Divinity is clearly declared through Varuna who, as the presiding spirit of the sea, appears in person to appease the Almighty incarnate as Rama.

To resume the story of Vaishnava resurgence and transformation I may begin by stressing Kalidasa's role in it. Though Kalidasa himself was a confirmed Saiva he lavished his poetic skill on a panegyric of the family of the Ikshvakus. The family-tree being very ancient and large he was justified in making his choice of the stage from which to begin and also to end. In accordance with the practice of the elite, just as Bhasa the dramatist made mention of the statues of three ancestors of Dasaratha so that with Dasaratha's newly placed one the group formed was that of the four ancestors of Rama, Kalidasa begins his account of the deeds of the family of his hero Rama with his fourth ascendant, Dileep. Bhavabhuti, the learned Brahmin dramatist of the 8th century A.D., mentions his four ascendants to place himself in the family-tree. Rama, who being the grandson of Raghu, can be called Raghava, in accordance with the correct practice of family-naming,[22] and has been so designated today, is the hero or the central figure of *Raghuvamsa.* Kalidasa by beginning his account of the family with Raghu's father and not with Raghu has made it clear that to him Rama is the central figure of his semi-epic. He wanted evidently to stress the fact of Rama's being an incarnation of Vishnu. In doing so he has dwelt upon certain incidents which were left out in Bhasa's attempts. He thus supplemented Bhasa in the process of establishing the Divinity of Rama.

In the case of Krishna, he found the belief in His having been an incarnation of Vishnu fully current and referred to it at least once in his *Meghaduta* in the expression 'gopa-veshasya Vishnoh', 'of Vishnu in the garb of a cowherd.' Krishna in the mythology is represented as a foster-son of a chief of cowherds. As a matter of fact the idea that Krishna was an incarnation of Vishnu was so well established and His worship was so far current for about five to seven centuries before Bhasa that one does not expect an intellectual to take up his pen in favour of establishing or proclaiming such an

accepted item of faith and practice.

It appears to me that this behaviour of the intellectual elite is some way connected with the composition of the *Bhagavadgita* and the *Harivamsa* both calculated to boost Krishna and to endear Him through his boyhood exploits. We do not know in what part of India they were put together, much less by whom. But I cannot help taking later history as a guide to earlier events and interpret the situation as somewhat parallel to the one which we get in the 16th century of the Christian era. Suradasa, the blind poet of western U.P. sang the praises of Krishna and Tulsidasa of the east immortalized and endeared Rama writing his enchanting work in Varanasi (Kasi). Kalidasa from wherever he came, was not a western U.P. man. And might it not be that the *Ramayana* in its present form was moulded by some Oudhian in the 3rd or 4th century of the Christian era?

Leaving the story of healthy rivalry between Krishnaism and Ramaism to a later chapter I shall proceed here with the progress of Vishnu-worship as such without reference to Krishna or Rama.

To begin with, I shall take up the worship of Seshasayin-form of Vishnu Narayana. For first, it is the form of Vishnu which, according to Kalidasa was appealed to and by implication the form that has to be approached for incarnating for the good of humanity; second, it is the form which Rama, as stated by the same poet, mentioned to Sita as residing in the ocean beyond or near Lanka; third, it is the form that according to the account in *Vayupurana* is the supercosmic source; fourth, it is the form in which Vishnu is invoked as the Super-God in one of the inscriptions of the beginning of the 5th century A.D.;[23] and fifth, His representation on a brick of the Bhitargav temple near Kanpur of the 5th century[24] is perhaps the earliest of Vishnu representations.

The striking feature of the acceptance of this form of Vishnu Narayana, in blissfully contemplative actuality, yet highly creative potentiality attitude and wrapped up in the epic-poetic suggestion of Supreme and Super-Cosmic divinity is that at present and for a fairly long time past has been the tutelary deity of the Travancore royal family and has had temples dedicated specifically to Him only in the extreme

south, in Tamilnad and in South Kerala. In the very large number of Vaishnava temples listed for Jaipur I do not find a single one for this form of Vishnu, nor have I come across any temple dedicated to Him in the descriptive literature of Gujarat or Bengal. The present distribution of the worship of Ananta or Seshasayin, or Ananta-Padmanabha as He is more commonly known in South Kerala, in the southern corner of India appears to be a corroboration of Kalidasa's statement that Seshasayin dwells in the ocean near Lanka and gives it the air of a prophecy.

The genesis of this spread of Seshasayi worship may be traced to Ramanuja's philosophy and personal inclination postulating Vishnu together with Lakshmi as the Supreme Deity. Seshasayi-form of Vishnu was the only one, at least till then, that had Lakshmi described and shown as being with Vishnu. One of the greatest centres of Vaishnavism vying with or perhaps surpassing even Tirupati, in South India is Srirangam in Trichinopoly district. The idol in the great temple of the place is that of Seshasayin Vishnu. He is known there as Rangaswami or Ranganatha and as Banerjea[25] has pointed "is the principal figure in many of the south Indian Vaishnava shrines." The present idol in the temple at Srirangam has both the consorts Lakshmi and Bhu represented in the group and they appear to have been added at the time of the restoration of the idol to the original shrine about 1370 A.D. after a sojourn away from it to avoid defilement by the Muslims of Trichinopoly. As the inscriptions in the temple range in date between the 9th and the 10th century A.D.[26] the core of the temple must have been constructed sometime before the 9th century A.D.

Ranganatha as the name of this Deity is a speciality of Tamilnad though Sriranga is in Samskrit an appellation of Vishnu and occurs in Marathi since the days of Jnanesvara. Jagadisa Ayyar has translated the name as Lord of the Assembly Hall. I should preferably render it as Lord of the Stage, as the Samskrit word 'ranga' with the 'bhumi' suffixed to it means 'stage' on which actors act and dancers dance. The name might have been chosen in rivalry with the Saivites who as pointed out earlier stressed Siva's aspect as the great dancer by perfecting and immortalizing the Nataraja image

as the one to be kept in all Siva temples. The Vaishnavites opposed to Nataraja Siva their Primordial Vishnu-Ranganatha!

Next comes the form of God known simply as Vishnu in the iconological and mythological literature. In the latter Vishnu-Anantasayin and Vishnu Garudavahana are the only Deities that favoured the devotees by removing their trouble-makers without resorting to incarnations. The former of whom I have said as much above killed the demons Madhu and Kaitabha who had threatened Vishnu's protege Brahma. Demon-removing was so much of an inherent trait of Vishnu that in Tamil India in the early mediaeval age a descendant, not known to mythology, by name Tanjan, was provided to Madhu, and Vishnu brought in to dispose of him. There is a temple of Vishnu to commemorate this feat at the place, about 2 miles north of Tanjore, where He is believed to have done it. And we are told that Tanjore came to be known by its present name because of the demon Tanjan. In Tamil, Tanjore is Tanjai.[27]

Vishnu-Garudavahana's exploit, to which too I have made reference earlier, is enshrined in the pathetic-triumphant episode of the lord of elephants in the grip of a huge water-snake. At Kanchi in Chingleput district the Deity is known as Varadaraja, prince of boon-grantors, and has a temple in current worship.

Vishnu in other than Telugu-Tamil districts is known either as Vishnu or more often as Lakshmi-Narayana or as in North India Balaji. In the former form His image is generally in the standing erect pose, very dignified. He has more often four arms than either two or eight and is *par excellence* 'chaturbhuja', four-armed, as Brahma is 'chaturanana', 'four-faced'. As Lakshmi-Narayana He has His consort Lakshmi by His side. In South India, as in the Lakshmi-Narayana temple at the famous Tirupati hill in North Arcot district, in the image of Lakshmi-Narayana, Lakshmi is seated on the left lap of Vishnu with His two left arms entwining Her.[28] This appears to be the more usual representation of this form of Vishnu in South India. It appears to me to be in imitation of the early Saivite images of Siva in embrace of Uma or Parvati.

Vishnu has still other names in South India by which He is known in preference to Vishnu or even Lakshmi-Narayana.

And these are Srinivasa, Venkatesa or Venkataramana. The Deity of the most famous shrine of Tirupati is known as Venkatesa.

From early iconological literature there has been a school of thought assigning two consorts to Vishnu. They are Sri or Lakshmi and Bhu or Earth. But representation of Vishnu with two consorts is rare in North India till late, when Krishna-cult familiarized the two consorts of Krishna viz. Satyabhama and Rukmini. But in South India it is fairly common even in the form of Vishnu or Venkatesa since Ramanuja's system of Vaishnavism gives three consorts, Lakshmi, Bhu and Lila.[29]

Of the ten incarnations of Vishnu, each one with a specific task to be performed for the good of the world and humanity, only nine have so far taken place. Of these in five Vishnu incarnated as a human being. Out of these in four He lived beyond the task that was the specific purpose of His incarnation. Two of them that of Parasurama and Buddha may be ignored, the latter because His acceptance is almost formal for the Hindus. The former has hardly ever received proper worship from a considerable section of the Hindus and was altogether too queer in concept as He is represented as having had almost a fight with the next incarnation, that as Rama of Dasaratha. This leaves only the two human incarnations of Vishnu, as Rama of Dasaratha and Krishna of Devaki, who lived full human lives, to be considered. The story of their Godhood is both long and in some way competitive yet evolving. I shall deal with it in the next chapter.

Two of the remaining four incarnations are therianthropic and have been immortalized in sculpture and mythology. They are the Boar and the Man-lion incarnations. The former has only rarely been designed Boar-man 'nrvaraha'. The sculpturing of the form appears in two varieties, one purely animal or theriomorphic and the other therianthropic. Theriomorphic sculptures of Boar-Vishnu have been found at Eran already noted and many other places in Northern India dating from the Gupta age to the later mediaeval period.[30] The relief sculpture at Badami in Bijapur and at Mahabalipura near Madras, hailing from the 6th and the 7th century A.D. respectively, deserve mention, more particularly the latter. The details appearing in the latter sculpture[31]

bring out the point of view propounded here and add support to the contention that in Tamilnad familial sentiments were influencing cosmology, theology and iconography.

The Man-Lion incarnation of Vishnu, Narasimha or Nrsimha in Samskrit, as the name makes out, is a wholly therianthropic form, the head of lion replacing the ordinary head of other forms, the nails of two hands, engaged in or meant for tearing open the bowels of the demon Hiranya-kasipu being leonine claws. Unlike the theriomorphic or other incarnations of Vishnu with the exception of the two purely human ones of Rama and Krishna, Narasimha or Man-Lion has been in worship for long ages and is so even today at least in Andhradesa and parts of Tamilnad. Outside these areas the worship of Narasimha has been and is rather rare, the only exception so far known to me being the city of Jaipur, which among its three hundred shrines receiving government grants has at least 9 dedicated to 'Narasingh'.

The idea of this incarnatory form has a venerable antiquity. According to Hopkins[32] it is "as old as the later *Upanishad, Taittriya Aranyaka*" i.e. the later Vedic age.

As historical evidence goes, of all forms and incarnations of Vishnu except Krishna-Vasudev, whose worship began as that of a hero of the Vrishni stock, Narasimha appears to have been the first to become the object of cult-worship. Commenting on a seal bearing the figure of Narasimha discovered at Basarh in U.P. Banerjea[33] observes: "This device is very important for it definitely shows that as early as the period when it was manufactured, this particular incarnatory form of Vishnu had acquired the form of the regular cult picture usually placed in the main sanctum of a temple."

This early popularity of Narasimha, though His direct acceptance by a scion of the Gupta family or by any of the important personages of resurgent Hinduism is not known, might be ascribed to the fact that Narasimha represents Vishnu in a ferocious form, unusual for God and specially for Him, specifically to destroy a great evil and not only to free the world from suffering but also to vindicate His great devotee, Pralhad. It is also the first form that proved the much-believed in immanence of God. Hindu elite oppressed or feeling oppressed by the ways and manners of the foreigners might have turned

to Narasimha for succour with much stronger reason than to any other form of God. But the wealthy and the great people of Northern India do not appear to have paid serious attention to a call for Narasimha worship. For though temples of Gupta age like those at Eran[34] near Bhopal and Deogadh near Jhansi[35] have small sculptures of this Deity, the bigger and what is even more significant the vigorous and ferocious, representations of Narasimha come from about the latter part of the sixth century onwards and those too from India south of the Narmada. The outstanding exception to this statement is the fine sculpture of Narasimha from Manora in Central India[36], which is unique in dynamic vigor and bodily sleakness. But it hails from about the 9th or the 10th century. The sculptures at Badami and Verula (Ellora) must have preceded it by two and three centuries. And here is what the great student of Indian sculpture and painting E.B. Havell[37] observes about the Verula relief: "The sculptor has chosen the moment when the terrific apparition of the man-lion rushes forth to sieze Hiranya, who, taken unawares and with the mocking taunt still on his lips, makes a desperate effort to defend himself."

The distribution of Narasimha temples in South India is curious, most of them being known to be in Andhradesa with stray ones in the Tamil districts of Chingleput, Salem, Trichinopoly and Madura. The famous Vaishnava centre in Trichinopoly district, viz., Srirangam has the distinction of being the only place as far south as that to have a well-known temple of Narasimha. And the Narasimha image of that temple stands unique in as much as it is a sixteen-armed one, only five of which are engaged in the act of tearing the demon.[38] Two other temples in Trichinopoly district are recorded but they appear to be local and resorted to by Madhva-Vaishnavas. The Madura shrine, a rockcut one, is perhaps the earliest in South India being as old as A.D. 770.[39] Srinivasan has noted one famous Narasimha shrine in Salem and another in Chingleput district. As against this his list of Narasimha temples in Andhradesa records one temple at Simhachalam near Waltair and another at Sholingur near Arkonam.[40] Both Srinivasan and Jagadisa Ayyar inform us that at Ahobalam near Kurnool there are nine shrines dedicated to as many

different forms of Narasimha.[41] The latter in addition states that the religious centre is of "great antiquity" and is "also known as Singavelkunram" and that "of all the places dedicated to Narasimha it stands pre-eminent" owing to the fact of its having shrines dedicated to all the nine forms of the Deity. The temple at the top of the hill enshrines the ferocious form and that at the foot of it the beneficent one known as Lakshmi-Narasimha, with Lakshmi shown seated on the left lap of Narasimha, or as Prahlada Varada because in that pose the Deity granted boons to His great devotee Pralhada. The temple at the top is considered to be more sacred than the one at the foot. The 'mula virgraha' or the fixed image of the temple was already in worship before the end of the 11th century A.D. and the metal images meant for being taken out in religious processions, 'utsava vigraha' as they are called, were set up in the first quarter of the 14th century.

There are at least four or five well-known places in Mysore district, where old temples or shrines of Narasimha exist, implying a partiality on the part of Vijayanagar kings—the monarchs who upheld successfully the banner of Hindu resurgence against the Muslim onslaught for about three and a half centuries, setting a lesson for later insurgents like Shivaji and his Marathas and also making their endeavour possibly fruitful—for the Deity. But I shall refer only to two of them, one of them being almost the earliest and the other almost the latest glory of Vijayanagar kingdom.

The great temple at Belur, known as either Chennakesava or simply as Kesava temple is a great testimony to the role of Vishnu and Vaishnavism in the resurgence of Hinduism. The huge temple has perhaps the largest sanctum proper, a feature rather uncommon in Hindu temples and particularly South Indian ones. It measures 178 feet by 156 feet. It was built to commemorate his conversion to Vaishnavism from Jainism by Vishnuvardhana who is said to have instituted on the same occasion four other Vishnu images at four other places. The image set up in the Belur temple is characteristically described in the inscriptions as that of Vijaya Narayana, 'victorious Narayana'.[42] The beautifully sculptured ceiling bearing the image of Narasimha tearing open Hiranyakasipu is

reproduced by Ayyar.[43] Vishnuvardhana who erected the Belur temple in A.D. 1117 had a son by name Narasimha who was the first of a number of Narasimhas who were monarchs of the Vijayanagara kingdom, the third of whom lived in the 3rd and 4th quarters of the 13th century. An inscription of A.D. 1522 in the Narasimha temple in the ruins at Hampi, the capital, mentions the consecration of the image of Lakshmi-Narasimha at Krishnapuri, a part of Hampi. The fine image of Narasimha found there is a huge monolithic sculpture about 25 feet high.[44]

This distribution of Narasimha temples is a configuration and is accompanied by a large number of Narasimhas among the contemporary kings and religious leaders. This distribution and configuration may be said to have ended, as far as famous and influential personalities are concerned, with Narasi or Narasimha Mehta (A.D. 1415-81), the illustrious Vaishnava and poet of Gujarat and the Maharashtrian miracle-worker Nrsimha Sarasvati, who promulgated the new sect of Datta—or Guru-worshippers in Maharashtra and died in about A.D. 1458.

In the Gupta resurgence Narasimha was not much in evidence among the elite and only one, the latest of them, Gupta monarch, who reigned from A.D. 468 to 472, was named Narasimha. In the South among the Pallavas about two centuries later it was that two Narasimhas figured, one between A.D. 630 and 668 and the other between A.D. 690 and 715.

The configuration of Narasimhas accompanying the contemporary temples of the Deity of the same name begins with the Hoysala king of Vijayanagar who ruled from A.D. 1141 to 1173. The great Vijaya Narayana temple at Belur with the fine Narsimha sculpture in the ceiling was built by his father, Vishnuvardhana in A.D. 1117.[45] There was a Narasimha among the Haihayas of Tripuri who held sway over his dominions from A.D. 1152-1170. The second Narasimha of the Hoysalas, known as Vira Narasimha II, ruled from A.D. 1220-34. Narasimha III, during whose regime his minister Somanatha erected the great Kesava temple at Somanathpur, which evoked even in its ruins great praise from Fergusson, ruled from A.D. 1254-1291. In the early part of

the career of the famous Madhva ascetic Naraharitirtha, his great preceptor Anandatirtha better known as Madhvacharya, who founded the dualist school of Hindu philosophy or theosophy, had commissioned Naraharitirtha to Orissa for bringing idols of Rama and Sita. Naraharitirtha appears to have lived there for sometime as the minister of the Ganga king of the time and an inscription from Ganjam district testifies to his having installed in A.D. 1281 an idol of Yoga Narasimha in a temple constructed at Srikurmam in Chicakole taluka.[46]

Among the Gangas the first king to bear the name of Narasimha ruled from A.D. 1253-56. And Naraharitirtha—Narahari, too, means man-lion, 'hari' in Samskrit meaning lion—lived for sometime at the court of the next but one king who bore the name of Narasimha II and ruled from A.D. 1275 to 1306. There were two more Narasimhas among the Orissan Gangas, the second and the last having ruled between A.D. 1378 and 1397.

Among the Hoysalas, Narasimha III ruled from A.D. 1254 to 1291. Thus he was the contemporary of Naraharitirtha, the great ascetic devotee of Narasimha, and also of the Ganga Narasimha II.

That neither the Hoysala Narasimhas nor the Ganga ones were able to achieve much is manifest from the history of the time. But they did play a part in providing breathing time. The Hoysalas particularly laid the foundations for the later kingdom of Vijayanagar, among whom, too, at least two Narasimhas figured. Perhaps the last of the Narasimha temples and the consecration of the image of Lakshmi-Narasimha was that at Hampi in A.D. 1522, among the ruins of which the colossal Narasimha statue already referred to was discovered.

Manifestation days or birthdays of most of the incarnatiions of Vishnu are recorded in the almanacs of the Indo-Aryan-speaking regions and of some of the Dravidian-speaking ones Observance of the day as some group-event whether in temples or private houses, as will be seen later, is common in the case of Krishna and Rama incarnations. In others individual devotees or Vaishnavas, as personal choice or family tradition, may and do observe only fast. Narasimha's birth-

day, however, appears to be an exception in Andhradesa, where most of the Narasimha temples in current worship hailing from mediaeval times are found. In the *Manual of Nellore District* written in 1873 at least four different temples situated in four talukas are listed as celebrating the day of Narasimha's manifestation on the bright 14th of the lunar month of Vaisakha which falls in May. The festival at the Gudali temple in Rampur taluka used to attract a crowd of 50000 people, while that at the Mulamudi temple in Nellore taluka was attended by 25000 persons. The other two were small affairs with 5000 and 2000 persons being in attendance respectively.

Vishnu whether as Narasimha or Seshasayi, as Ranganatha or Venkatesa has tended to be the object of worship in Dravidian-speaking regions from about the 6th century onwards. It is not Vishnu without His consort, not even Narasimha with or without Lakshmi, however, that has captivated the religious hearts of South Indians and of other Hindus who —and they are a large number—visit South India on pilgrimage. It is either Ranganatha of Srirangam or Venkatesa of Tirupati who is the Deity that evokes reverential piety. The learned Brahmin, P.V. Jagadisa Ayyar,[47] who to judge by his caste name must have been a Saiva, writing forty years ago remarked: "The temple of Sri Venkatesvara is one of perfection. The spiritual influence wielded by it is unique. I can give you instances of strong-minded atheists and sceptics who went into it by the pressure of their wives and children and came out of it as completely transformed theists devoted to Him more than their fellow theists too. All this cannot be by a mere statue-like representation of the Iswara but by the pervading *Amsa* of God in the intensest form in this particular shrine."

10

VISHNU ENRAPTURES THE PEOPLE: THE MAN-GOD KRISHNA

The *Vayupurana*[1] asserts that Vishnu had to take birth as a human being seven times and that this was the consequence of a curse. Of these births, only three are included in the standard group of ten incarnations, one of them being Parasurama. I have already indicated why Parasurama will not engage our attention and I shall pass on to the remaining two, viz. Rama and Krishna-Vasudeva. In both these incarnations Vishnu lived the full life of an ordinary human being with occasional manifestation of His Divinity. In the incarnation of Krishna as epic-mythological account goes He frequently resorted to miracle-working. In His Rama incarnation on the other hand one may say that He did not make, except on two occasions, a show of any power, which surpassing that of a very superior human being, an extraordinary one, would have to be counted as simply Divine.

Both these incarnations of Vishnu are attended by phenomena which suggest the acceptance of man-god more than that of an incarnation of the Deity as in the other usually acknowledged incarnations. In the case of Rama, the son of Dasaratha, there was in existence in the early part of his life another incarnation of Vishnu, Parasurama or 'Rama-with-the-axe' who even challenged Rama to a duel. The case of Krishna was more complicated. His elder brother Balarama, 'Rama-with-the-plough,' was himself reckoned an incarnation. In many a list he figured in place of Krishna as an incarnation of Vishnu. And there was one contemporary of Krishna, hailing from Bengal, who had assumed the usual insignia of Vishnu and challenged Krishna. In addition there were other challengers of not only Krishna's Divinity but even of his Kshatriyahood.[2]

Rama is the earlier of the two incarnations. According

to the Puranic lists of dynasties as sifted by Pargiter,[3] Krishna must have lived twenty-eight generations later than Rama, i.e. about 700 years later. Yet we know from literary, and even mythological sources that Krishna-Vasudeva came to be accorded the status of a Deity and received worship and Divine honours at least seven to eight centuries before Rama had them. To judge from the data of purely literary sources the lag of Rama's Divinity can be shortened to about five centuries at most. Hopkins[4] has thus summarised the situation revealed by the two epics *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*: "Krishna Devakinandana (who is Vasudeva) is the god without end, unborn, born in the house of Yadu..... Such is in short the position of Krishna in nine tenths of the great epic [Mahabharata] and even the [later portion of] *Ramayana* recognises Vasudeva as a form of Vishnu. While Rama becomes Vishnu only in the later additions of the little epic [Ramayana], Krishna as Vishnu permeates the great epic."

Krishna-Vasudeva has been receiving worship since before 300 B.C. and shrines dedicated to Him existed in 200 B.C.[5] Krishna-worship was centred round the western city of Mathura and made its way east into Bengal sometimes before the 5th century A.D. For a temple of Govindaswami was erected at Baigram in Bogra district in the first part of that century.[6] Rama-worship is naturally centred in Ayodhya, the birth-place of Rama and the capital of the royal line in which he was born. Its first appearance, too, as will be seen later, is attested in the east central region. Today Ramaism, as the cult of Rama worship as distinguished from Krishnaism, the cult of Krishna worship, may be conveniently called, appears as a wedge driven between the two wings of Krishnaism, western and eastern. And like the material wedge its broad head lies in the north and its thin end is being driven south.

It is necessary and desirable to study Krishna worship and its spread first, though the particular incarnation is later than that of Rama.

The earliest reference to Vasudeva-Krishna worship, that in the grammatical work of Panini, is one of worship not of Vasudeva-Krishna alone but along with Rama or Samkarshana, the elder brother of Krishna, commonly known as Balarama.[7] They are two of the five heroes of the Vrishni race whose

statues for worship are mentioned in a Mathura inscription of the first quarter of the 1st century of the Christian era. Some kind of shrine for the two of them is recorded in an inscription from Ghosundi or Nagari in Udaipur district, which is assigned a pre-Christian era date. And Patanjali's undoubted reference to celebrations with the accompaniment of music at the shrines of these two take not only their worship but also group-celebrations of some remarkable occasions in their lives to before the second century B.C.[8]

I have elsewhere[9] drawn attention to the practice current in royal families of erecting statues of distinguished ancestors and placing them in standard temples where either regular or occasional tendance or worship was offered by the members of the family. Such shrines could hardly have failed to receive homage from the people at large. The prevalence of a hero-cult, the hero being known by the Samskrit term 'Vira', has been attested in U.P.[10] In view of this it is very instructive to find in the *Vayupurana* mention of the five 'vyuhas', emanations, of "pancharatra" Vaishnavism, viz. Samkarshana or Balarama, Vasudeva or Krishna, Pradyumna, Samba and Aniruddha, as 'vamsavira's, i.e. 'family-heroes'. And they are introduced as 'Gods in human-forms.'[11]

Of the four compeers of Krishna-Vasudeva, some trace in sculptural remains of Samskarshana alone is known. There are two representations, one from Mathura dated the 1st century B.C., and the other from Tumain in Gwalior district, possibly dated 1st century A.D. In both, the canopy of the serpent-hoods is the only indication of Balarama's god-hood.[12] We may conclude from this that all the four compeers of Krishna fell soon behind him in their competition. Krishna's extraordinary exploits, masterful personality and intellectual stature raised him above all. But the rise could take place only after about three centuries of common worship.

Whoever, either a pure philosopher, a 'dharma'-leader, or a Krishnaite partisan or some elite who combined in himself all the three features, that put together that work, unique in Indian history and literature, known as the *Bhagavadgita* but usually referred to as the *Gita* simply, was in no small measure the proximate cause of the rise of Krishnaism. It appears to me that taking into account all the known facts of the rise

and spread of Krishna worship, the date of the collation of the *Bhagavadgita* should be placed in the 1st century of the Christian era and not before. This will explain how it is only in the later part of the *Ramayana* that Krishna's Divinity and identity with Vishnu are recognized. It will also provide a cogent reason for what Bhasa, the earliest Samskrit dramatist, who must have lived in about the 2nd century A.D., did with Krishna legends and the story of the *Mahabharata*. In his drama, *Dutavakya*, he has strayed from the text of the *Mahabharata*, not merely to portray Duryodhana in darker colours but also and very specifically and pronouncedly to proclaim the 'Divinity', the 'Vishnuhood' of Krishna.

The *Vayupurana*, the earliest of the Puranas, which is generally ascribed to the 2nd century A.D.[13], in the context of the enumeration of the incarnations of Vishnu disposing of most of them with one verse each devotes ten to Krishna. Leaving out the four which list the demons He killed, we find the incarnation as such described in six verses. In them His specialities are mentioned: that He was born for sport, for destroying demons and to re-establish Dharma which had suffered diminution. The phrases used 'nashte dharme', 'when Dharma was lost', 'dharmavyavasthana,' 'establishment of Dharma', and even more 'mohayan sarva-bhutani yogatma yogamayaya', 'the controlled soul enticing all beings with the help of his yogic illusions' are fully resonant with the verbal sounds of the *Bhagavadgita*.[14] It is in reply to the question about the past births of Krishna that the incarnations of Vishnu are described. The delineation of the genealogy of Krishna and his descendants takes up a whole chapter (34th) and what is significant in the context, is named the "description of the family or stock of Vishnu" and not of Krishna. Krishna's birth, how He was born lustrous with all the insignia of Vishnu, how His father Vasudeva requested Him to assume ordinary mild human form and how Vasudeva took Him and placed Him with Yasoda, the wife of Nanda, taking with him to Mathura Yasoda's new-born daughter, His eight marriages with eight different ladies, only hinting at the traditional number of sixteen thousand wives, the sons born to Him of different wives are described. In the end stating that the total number of lines or families of Yadavas are eleven

the story is concluded with the assertion that all of them are one stock being Vaishnavas and having Vishnu as their guide and lord.

The carreer of Krishna as depicted in mythology and represented in sculptures can be divided and best studied in four aspects. First, Krishna as a miracle-working and valorous boy and youth; second, Krishna as a gay and voluptuous youth and adult; third, Krishna as a skilful compaigner against and destroyer of powerful but wicked persons; and fourth, Krishna as a philosopher and soother.

Krishna's exploits as a miracle-working and valorous boy and youth, some of which occur in the description of his life from *Vayupurana* given above, are retailed in the *Mahabharata* too and in greater detail in the *Harivamsa* which is regarded as an appendix to the great epic.[15]

On two doorjambs discovered at Mandor near Jodhpur and ascribed by the discoverer to the 4th century A.D. occur the reliefs of, among other episodes, the two exploits of boy and youth Krishna which have been enrapturing the minds of hundreds and thousands of Hindus through ages and which must surely have endeared Him not only to boys of Vrindavan and Mathura but also must have made Him a pet of the lasses and ladies of those places. They are, (1) Krishna's belabouring of the dreaded water-snake Kaliya infesting the river Yamuna; and (2) His lifting up of the huge mountain called Govardhana, 'nourisher of cows' with His small finger and providing effective shelter to the cowherds and the many young cowherdesses who were terror-stricken at the sudden, ferocious and continuous downpour of rain for a whole week.

The last episode was presented to the view of the admiring and pious persons at various centres in temples and shrines dating from the 5th century A.D. to about the 8th at least. Deogadh near Jhansi, Verula (Ellora) near Aurangabad, Badami in Bijapur district, and Paharpur in Bengal and Mahabalipur near Madras are the principal places where this miracle of power and symbol of supreme capacity for relief of any distress was sculptured. The sculpture at the last place is of colossal dimensions.[16] This exploit has been enshrined in the alternative name given to Krishna as Govardhanadhari, 'holder of Govardhana' reduced to the short

form of Govardhana or 'Giridhari', 'holder of mountain.'

Temples dedicated to this form of Krishna and in current worship appear to be rare outside the region surrounding Mathura. At least I have not come across any described as such among the numerous temples listed by Ayyar and Srinivasan or in the *Gazetteers* or *Manuals* of Trichinopoly, Tanjore, Salem, Nellore, Cuddapah from South India and Nadia, Birbhum, Santhal Paraganas, Hooghly and Burdwan from Bengal. Nor is there any temple of Govardhandhari in Poona, though Krishna temples occur. In the city of Jaipur in Rajasthan on the other hand among the 109 shrines consecrated to the worship of Krishna in seven at least the presiding Deity is known as Govardhananathji.

The exploit records the conscious change of a festival, which previous to Krishna's stay in Vrindavan among the cowherds was celebrated by them in honour of Indra, the god of rain, to procure plenty from their land. Youthful Krishna forced the cowherds to change it as in his honour and in that of the mountainous country nearby, which supported the cattle, the main wealth of the cowherds. In doing this He demonstrated His great prowess by what must be called a miracle which in ordinary parlance must be described as mesmerism or hallucination.

It is worthwhile noting that the festival, as its observance has been known from the 11th century, from the work of the Muslim scholar-sojourner Alberuni,[17] is cattle-worship as a group-event. For the last eight to nine hundred years at least it has been held as a part of the great complex called the Divali festival or the festival of the feast of lights. The Divali festival of three days in its totality is almost purely in honour of Vishnu all the three days commemorating Vishnu's deeds, two of Vishnu-Krishna's and one of Vishnu-Vaman's exploits.

It is generally on the second day of the Divali festival, the dark fifteenth, that in most of the regions of Indo-Aryan speech Govardhan-worship or Gokrida, i.e. cattle-play is prescribed in the almanacs and observed by the people. Well-decorated cattle, after worshipping one's own, are in some parts carried in procession pompously. Abul Fazl[78] has recorded how Akbar used to take delight in standing in the balcony to receive the homage of the magnificent cattle and

their owners as they paid a visit to the royal abode on their processional way. On the previous day, the dark fourteenth, the first day of Divali, very early in the morning, about 4 a.m. all Hindus take an oil bath, a ceremonial bath with special preparation, and doing something, either giving a loud call in the name of Govind or simply by letting off crackers express their joy and visit temples. In Maharashtra and in Gujarat and Karnatak the day is not only known as Narakachaturdasi, as in all Hindi areas, but is also specifically described as the dark fourteenth on which Krishna killed the demon Naraka. Naraka was the king of Assam and had imprisoned many kings and many royal and other ladies. Krishna freed them all. The legend thus enshrines and naturally glorifies the great and risky endeavour of Krishna of not only establishing the moral order but also thereby integrating Assam with hither India from which evidently it was distinct till then. In the Hindi-speaking region to judge by the account given by Kunvar Kanaiyaju in his book *Vrata aur Tyauhara*, this legend of the killing of Naraka is not known, much less as associated with the festival of 'Narakachaturdasi.'

On the dark fifteenth, in the evening, i.e. the evening of the day on which in the morning the worshipped cattle are driven in procession, generally falls what is called 'Lakshmi pujana', the worship of Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth. The rite is mainly observed by merchants and traders and may not have had any connection with Vishnu, but Lakshmi happens to be His consort. And the next day commemorates Vishnu-Vaman's deed which, unlike any of the other deeds of liberation, had repercussions on Vishnu Himself, demonstrating His generosity. Vishnu-Vaman sent down Bali for the sake of the chief of the gods. The magnanimity of Bali moved Him and He agreed to stand as Bali's doorkeeper and guaranteed him worship on one day. That is why the day is, all over India, known as 'Bali-pratipada' or Bali's first.

Krishna's boyhood career among the cowherds and cowherdesses of Vrindavan mentioned in the *Mahabharata* are naturally devoid of the tender climate attending the description of the playful or powerful deeds of children. Much less is there any scope or occasion for bringing in dance, whether solo or duet or group, as a usual accompaniment of play and

sport in daily routine or on occasions. R. G. Bhandarkar[19] states: "The Avatara of Vasudeva is mentioned as having been assumed for the destruction of Kamsa, but none of the demons whom the cowherd Krishna killed in cow settlement." He draws attention to the great contrast on this point between the statements in the *Mahabharata* on the one hand and those in the *Harivamsa,* the *Vayupurana* and the *Bhagavatapurana* on the other. He concluded that the legend about the cowherd Krishna and his identification with Vasudeva Krishna must have been effected in the period intervening between the composition of the *Mahabharata* and of the last three works. Moreover, he pointed out, "the story of the Vrishni prince Vasudeva having been brought up in a cow settlement is incongruous with his later career as depicted in the *Mahabharata.*"

Bhandarkar formed his opinion mainly on the basis of his analysis of the Narayaniya section of the late and much tampered with 'parvan' the Santi, of the *Mahabharata.* W. E. Hopkins, writing after the controversy about boy-Krishna and the suggested Christian influence in the mythological shaping of his career had raged between Kennedy and Keith in the years 1907-1908, drew attention to a number of incidents credited to and circumstances of boy Krishna, including his membership of the family of the cowherd Nanda in the 1st, the 2nd and the 7th 'parvans' of the *Mahabharata.* He concluded on the sedately balanced note: "Of his amorousness the epic says little, but it alludes to his revels,—probably the lover-god was not compatible with the heroic side and not yet developed... There is no great stress laid on the child god. Like the lover-god the child-god develops later." And in the footnote he added, reviewing the fruits of the controversy he observed: "Kennedy distinguishes several Krishnas and attributes the Child to the Gujars, due to Christian influence. The perfected cult may have been influenced from this source but the divine child, as shown above, is explicitly recognised several times in the epic (prior to the pseudo-epic) and must be as old as the Christian era."[20]

Kennedy attributed the development of the boy-god in pastoral surroundings to the Gujars who before pouring into India were influenced by Christian tales about the child

Christ. Bhandarkar has not mentioned Kennedy's opinion. Evidently he was convinced that Gujar contribution would be rather too late to fit in properly in the undisputed chronology of the development of the Krishna cult and legend. He concluded that the contribution was made by the intruding hordes of the Abhiras.

Bhandarkar's[21] considered opinion runs thus: "If then about the end of the second century, and in the third, the Abhiras enjoyed high political position, they must have migrated into the country in the first century. They probably brought with them the worship of the boy-god and the story of his humble birth, his reputed father's knowledge that he was not his son, and the massacre of the innocents. The last two correspond to Nanda's knowing that he was not the father of Krishna and Kamsa's killing all children. The story of Krishna's boyhood, such as that of killing Dhenuka, a demon in the form of a wild ass, were brought by Abhiras, and others were developed after they came to India. It is possible that they brought with them the name Christ also, and this name probably led to the identification of the boy-god with Vasudeva-Krishna. The Goanese and the Bengalis often pronounce the name Krishna as Kushto or Krishto and so the Christ of the Abhiras was recognised as the Samskrit Krishna."

I am not aware of any evidence put forward by anybody in support of the Abhiras being considered to have been invaders, intruders or immigrants from outside India and from the Western side. On the other hand, there is clear proof of their having been inhabitants of India from at least the beginning of the 2nd century before Christ. As I have mentioned elsewhere[22] the grammarian Patanjali writing in 150 B.C. treated the Abhiras as a caste, 'jati'. The particular passage somehow must have escaped the keen eye of R. G. Bhandarkar. With Patanjali's remarks about them indicating that the Abhiras were not classed either as Sudras or as Kshatriyas one cannot dub them as immigrants and that too after the Christian era. If the Abhiras are immigrants they must have come to India at least two centuries before the birth of Christ and could not possibly have had any knowledge of child-god in their existence outside India which they

could have brought with them as their contribution to the Indian religious mythology.

Second, sculptural remains, which are ascribed to the 2nd or the 3rd century after Christ and hailing evidently from Mathura region, lately discovered, prove that infant Krishna's transfer from Mathura was fully a matter of belief then. As J. N. Banerjea[23] observes: "One of the oldest representations of the story of Krishna Janmashtami is to be found on a fragmentary relief of the second or third century A.D. in the collection of the Mathura museum. It shows Vasudeva fording the Yamuna with new-born Krishna in his hand to exchange him for safety with the just born daughter of Nanda and Yasoda."

Third, even earlier than the date of the sculptural relief is the evidence about Krishna's boyhood among cowherds and cowherdesses furnished by Bhasa in his drama, *Balacharita*, 'Boyhood-life'. Bhasa is a Samskrit dramatist, who cannot be assigned to a date later than 200 A.D. and might have lived in the first century of the era.[24] In the drama mentioned above he has depicted Krishna's youthful sport among the cowherds and cowherdesses. It is known as 'hallisaka'. In later Krishnaism,[25] the two varieties of dance associated with it are named 'hallisaka' and 'rasa'.

In the context, the scene of 'hallisaka' dance painted with vigour and truthful emotion in the caves at Bagh[26] in Central India gains significance in view of the fact that the fresco is commonly considered to be pre-Christian in date. The central figure of the male, clad in a peculiar manner, though it cannot represent Krishna, not improbably can stand for one of the important cowherds. All the other participants in the dance are women who in their dress and ecstatic attitudes can represent cowherdesses. But whether or not the dance scene in the Bagh caves depicts the cowherds and their dance, it is agreed that it portrays 'hallisaka' dance in progress. It thus affords evidence that one of the most emotionally charged activities of the life-complex of the Vrindavan region as represented in Krishnaism is not only a pre-Christian trait of the Indian culture but also a non-Abhira one of much wider and earlier spread than can be logically ascribed to the Abhiras. It appears to me that there is no reasonable ground

to ascribe the legend of boy-Krishna in Gokula or the cowherd settlements to foreign tribes. As the importance of Krishna among the Vrishni-hero-cult fans grew the constituent elements of the boy-god tale began to be stressed and magnified so that they supported the Supreme Divinity of Krishna. The process that enabled the sponsors and devotees of Krishnaism to dethrone Balarama Samkarshana from the pedastle of 'avatarahood' promoted the growth of the boy-god-Krishna legend.

The idea of the image known as 'Navaneeta Krishna', 'Krishna with butter' enshrines the life story of Krishna in the cowherds settlement for worship by pious people, at least since the time the Tuluva ascetic Madhvacharya, is said to have set up the Deity in that form in his sanctuary at Udipi[27] in about A.D. 1250. In Maharashtra in this aspect of Krishna he is called Balakrishna and depicted as almost a crawling child. It appears that in Tamil[28] land both expressions are in use. But the image of Navaneeta Krishna is a fine boyhood-Krishna in a superb dance pose and is then called 'Navaneeta-nritya Krishna,' Krishna dancing for butter. At the further stage of youth, almost at the adult stage, He is either Govardhanadhari as already stated or Venugopala, 'Cowherd with the flute.' All these are two-armed images. In the last representation he stands in the charming 'tribhanga' 'thrice-bent' pose with the right leg bent at the knee and turned towards the left with the right toes touching the left foot and supporting the right foot almost erect. In Tamilnad the image of this Deity in the famous Venugopala temple at Gingee in South Arcot district has the consorts, Rukmini and Satyabhama, on the two sides, in poses harmonising with that of Krishna in a supreme composition.[29] In Maharashtra, Krishna in this aspect of His pastoral life is commonly known as 'Muralidhara', 'holder of flute' and is not accompanied by His consorts. In Jaipur among the many idols of Krishna in its temples there are eight which are known as 'Murlimanoharji', 'charming flute-(holder)'.

Krishna's birth has been traditionally known to have been the eighth of the dark half of the lunar month of Sravana, and a celebration to commemorate it has been held for long ages. In the *Mahabharata* Siva is said to be indulg-

ing in the worship of Krishna's eighth, 'Krishnashtami' or 'Janmashtami'.[30] Currently the 'Krishnajayanti', 'Janmashtami' or 'Gokulashtami', as the eighth of the dark half of Sravana is called, is observed by Hindus in general and Vaishnavas in particular. The celebration is both public and private-individual. Householders, generally of Brahmin and similar castes bring in a clay image or draw a picture of boy-Krishna and worship Him at about midnight. Next day, before evening the image, if any, is disposed off. In the temples the worship is more elaborate and naturally it is a group-event which is public.

The group and public aspect of the festival which I have fully described elsewhere[31] as an important item of the religion of rural Maharashtra enshrines and commemorates Krishna's boyhood among the cowherds in Vrindavan, people actively participating in it being called 'gopalas' or 'cowherds'. And in the city of Bombay on the 9th of the dark half of Sravana one sees a large number of troupes of these so-called 'gopalas' going in the streets in formation chanting 'Govinda Gopala' 'Oh Govind, Oh Gopala'.

In the Kannada-speaking region, in Tamilnad and in Andhradesa, too, some observance of the nature of what is known in the Marathi region as 'dahi-handi', curds-pot, and its breaking by groups of people evidently as Krishna's companions in the cowherd settlement, is current, though only among some of the higher castes. It does not appear to be accompanied by the moving troupes as in Bombay. As far as Andhradesa is concerned to judge by the account of Krishna Jayanti given in the *Mannual of Nellore* (1873) it would apapear to have had the same form as in Maharashtra and Bombay.[32]

Krishna as a gay and voluptuous youth and adult, i.e. Krishna as a lover-god, is an aspect of Krishnaism which is the most developed and widely spread form of Krishnaism in North India today. In mythology it is the latest to get mention. It is centred round the cowherdesses and more specifically on one of them, that too a married one, Radha by name. Krishna has never been named along with His wives, neither with Satyabhama nor even with his more beloved wife Rukmini who loved Him so dearly. He too had been attach-

ed to her so much that He had managed to carry her away by force in spite of the opposition of some at least of her elderly relatives. But He is not only known as Radha-vallabha, after whom a flourishing sect of Krishnaism spread over Mathura, Rajasthan and Gujarat is called, or as Radha-ramana, Radha's beloved, but also as Radha-Krishna. And Radha-Krishna is the form of Krishna and the Deity that is worshipped by most of the followers of Krishnaism in North India.

Outside mythology, the earliest literary reference—there does not appear to be any sculptural representation of early date of this form of Krishna—to Krishna's dalliance with Radha is found in the *Gatha Saptasati* of Hala, a Prakrit compilation assigned to a date not later than A.D. 200. It runs: "Oh, Krishna you, who are blowing dust out of the eyes of Radhika with breeze from your mouth, humble the pride felt by the cowherdesses that are round you and also of those [less fortunate ones] who are not with you." In another verse where the direct mention of only Krishna occurs according to the commentator a taunt by a buxom but proud married cowherdess is implied. In two other verses there is a reference to cowherdesses and Yasoda and the sweet songs of the former.[33]

The second reference to the dalliance occurs in the drama *Venisamhara,* 'plaiting of the braid,' by Bhatta-Narayana, who cannot be assigned to any date later than the eighth century A.D. Bhatta-Narayana was a Sarasvat Brahmin of Kanauj, who along with some others, had settled in Bengal on the invitation of one of the kings. In the second verse of invocation to his drama, Bhatta-Narayana, wishing to bless his spectators and readers, calls upon Krishna's appeasement of Radha to induce her to engage again in the sport of the dance called Rasa to do the task. Radha in the midst of the progress of the dance, discovering some dalliance or special attention being bestowed on some other cowherdess of the dancing group got cross and breaking off from the group started in tears to move away. Krishna seeing this walked placing his foot on Radha's footprint after her. Radha noticing this and sensing other indications got softened and there was immediate and complete rapport between her and

Krishna.

After this literary reference to Radha, or Radhika, the endearing diminutive form which is the one actually used by Bhatta-Narayana in the 8th century A.D., it is about the third quarter of the 12th century that we find her enthroned with Krishna by the philosopher and religious preacher Nimbarka. One of the ten stanzas which are considered to contain the whole of Nimbarka's philosophical and religious teaching refers to this aspect of Krishna. It runs:[34] "I reflect on the daughter of Vrishabhanu (Radhika), who shines with a corresponding beauty [to Krishna's] on the left side (of Krishna), is attended on by thousands of female friends, and who always confers all desired objects." It is not only that Radha or Radhika is enthroned by Krishna's left side but also she is the Deity who grants all desired objects, the affirmation about Krishna in the preceding stanza being completely devoid of any reference to his granting of desires or boons.

Bhandarkar was definite that Nimbarka was a Telugu Brahmin from Bellary district settled in Vrindavan Mathura. A. S. Geden[35] found some evidence on the strength of which he equally categorically makes Nimbarka a Bengali. If Nimbarka may be considered to be a Bengali ascetic who sponsored the worship of Radha and Krishna, after having gone South attracted by Ramanuja's teaching, the continuity of Radha-Krishna legend and worship in Bengal and its ultimate inspiration from the region round about Mathura through Bhatta-Narayana and other Saraswat Brahmins migrating from Kanauj to Bengal becomes an established fact.

Illicit love as the supreme expression of divine grace in its worship as a component of Krishnaism has troubled students of the religious history of India. And R. G. Bhandarkar accounted for its genesis and growth by reference to his theory of Abhira contribution. He observes:[36] "The dalliance of Krishna with cowherdesses, which introduced an element inconsistent with the advance of morality into the Vasudeva religion, was also an after-growth, consequent upon the freer intercourse between the wandering Abhiras and their more civilised Aryan neighbours. Morality cannot be expected to be high or strict among races in the condition of the Abhiras at the time [about the 3rd century A.D.] and

their gay neighbours took advantage of its looseness. Besides, the Abhira women must have been fair and handsome as those of the Ahir-Gavaliyas or the cowherds of the present day are." In so far as this opinion bases itself on the looseness of sexual morals and fairness and buxom nature of pastoral women one can agree with it. But it need not be associated with a specific ethnic group like that of the Abhiras.

The Yadavas, i.e. the ethnic group among which Krishna was born were by no means paragons of virtue. Aniruddha, the son's son of Krishna is represented in the *Harivamsa* as a person indulging in sexual congress getting excited for it by drink. He must have seduced Usha, the daughter of the demon Bana, which led to a war as narrated in a later mythological book, one of the *Puranas*. Krishna's son and Anirudhda's father, Pradyumna was evidently in love with Mayavati who was the wife of a demon and the lady too would appear to have responded. Pradyumna managed to kill the demon and take away the woman. Another demon's daughter he carried off and took to wife killing her father. Krishna's father, according to the *Harivamsa* over and above his seven or eight wives had two mistresses. Krishna's mother's brother the hated Kamsa was born to his mother not from her own husband but from a demon. Krishna's brother Balarama was greatly addicted to drink. Kunti, Krishna's father's sister and Pandava's mother, got her sons from extra-marital intercourse. We need not assume the prevalence of very strict sexual morality among the folks of the part of India in which Krishna and his family lived. The dalliance therefore may be taken as more or less a constituent of the original pattern. Why it came to the surface so late is the more important problem. And with my present equipment I have no explanation to offer.

Jayadeva the Bengali Samskrit lyric poet of extraordinary genius who lived after A.D. 1200 was the person who, inspite of his writing being in Samskrit, is the person who carried the dalliance of Radha, Gopis and Krishna to the people enthusing them about it as a noble and lovable affair. In his *Gitagovinda,* which is set to music and dance, Jayadeva has described the dalliance in the most endearing terms. It is the representation of it in dance that publicised and pre-

sented in almost naked and open form the actual dalliance and energized eroticism. Jayadeva has been apotheosized. At Kendul in Birbhum district, the birth-place of Jayadeva, an annual fair lasting for three days beginning with the last day of the lunar month Paush is held in his honour at his 'Samadhi' 'funerary monument'. It used to draw, when the *Gazetteer of Birbhum District* was compiled, a crowd of over 50000 pilgrims.[37]

Vidyapati of North Bihar and Chandidasa of Bengal, both contemporaries, of about A.D. 1375 to 1450, carried on the preaching of the cult of Radha-Krishna in eastern India, particularly through the medium of the local language. The great Chaitanya of Bengal, who began to receive worship due to God in his own life-time and who has ever since been known as 'Mahaprabhu', great lord, was born in A.D. 1485 and died in 1533. Vallabha, one of the four great Acharyas and a Telugu Brahmin was born in A.D. 1479. After living in Vrindavan and Mathura and founding a sect known after him or by the sectarian name of 'Pushtimarga' he died in 1531.

To these great Vaishnava males must be added the unique Vaishnava saint-poetess, the Rajasthani royal lady Mirabai, who lived from about A.D. 1498 to 1546 and was thus the junior contemporary of the great founders of the Radha-Krishna sect. Her sweet songs accompanying her ecstatic dance at Dwarka, near Porbunder must have helped tremendously the work of Vallabhacharya. Her fervent songs more often than not mentioning in the last line her appeal in her name to Krishna in His Govardhanadhari or Giridhari form have been captivating the hearts not only of the pious and the devout but also of the indifferent people fond of song.

Another important Radha-Krishna devotee, a male, is equally unique in so far as he was a blind man but a sweet poet chanting in the language of Delhi-Kanauj or of Mathura region. He is Suradasa. Having been born in A.D. 1482 he stood between the senior Vallabhacharya and the junior Chaitanya. He lived longer than all the three Vaishnavas mentioned above and died in A.D. 1560.

With such a galaxy of poetic personalities, appealing through both the language of the high-brow elite and of the ordinary folk, the new God-form must soon have become cur-

rent. In actual fact, none of the extant temples of this cult in Bengal which are recorded in the *Gazetteers* of the Santhal Paraganas, Birbhum, Hooghly, Mabhum, Burdwan and Nadia, is known to be earlier than A.D. 1674, in which year the temple of Radharaman, according to an inscription, at Gosai Durgapur in Nadia was built.[38]

The chief Vaishnava festivals of Bengal are the Ras Jatra in the month of Kartik which is a bath-festival, the Dol Jatra, a swing festival in Phalgun and the Ratha Jatra or the car festival in Vaisakh with the Ulta rath or the return festival as the fourth. The Ratha Jatra or the car festival at Mahesh near Ballabhpur in the Hooghly district is said to be "the largest festival of its kind in India outside Puri" in Orissa.[39]

One development in the western section of the sect, among the followers of Vallabhacharya and his 'pushtimarga' must be mentioned here. And that is the subordination of the temple of the image of the Deity to that of the actual residence of the head-preceptor or of the local preceptor as the case may be. As R. G. Bhandarkar[40] puts it: "Each Guru ['preceptor', commonly known as 'maharaja,' great king] has a temple of his own, and there are no public places of worship. The devotee should visit the temple of his Guru [known as 'Haveli', 'bangalow'] at stated intervals, which are eight in number during the day." Vallabha and his son Vithalesa are known as 'Acharya' 'preceptor' and 'Gosai' (Goswamin) 'lord' respectively and have to be saluted before offering any worship to the Deity. This extraordinary importance of the Guru or preceptor has resulted in one of the principal doctrines of the sect being that "all their [the followers'] belongings should be dedicated to their Guru." And this doctrine as Bhandarkar has said "is not seldom carried to an excess."

Chaitanyite Krishnaism, which is ethically as indifferent as Vallabhite Radha-Krishnaism, has propagated another evil which is even greater than the one involved in the last doctrine of the Vallabhite sect and its actual operation. S. K. De[41], a well-equipped Sanskrit scholar, a profound and sympathetic student of Bengal Vaishnavism, thus concludes his findings: "The glorification of the sex-impulse is supreme. In the gorgeous expansion of the legend, for instance, in the

Kavya [poetry], Nataka [drama], Champu [a variety of poetic composition] of the sect, composed by its venerable teachers, there is nothing but a series of erotic situations, described with the evident relish of sensuous enjoyment, never symbolised into spiritual truths. It is purely and emphatically the language of the senses, even if one may make a desperate attempt to read a supersensuous meaning into it... The Bengal School of Chaitanya no doubt condemns erotic practice, but it encourages vicarious erotic contemplation."

Krishna as a resourceful compaigner against and a persevering destroyer of powerful but wicked people is writ large in the story of the *Mahabharata*. His destruction of the demon Naraka has ever been remembered annually. He disposed of the wicked Kamsa and was the main architect of the removal of Jarasamdha, the semi-barbarous king of South Bihar. He did not mind destroying his mother's sister's son Sisupala who in league with the eastern Jarasamdha was creating trouble and was on the side of the wicked Kauravas.

The fourth aspect of Krishna's career, that of a soother and a philosopher is not only the most monumental and unique among the careers of all Hindu Gods but was also the most important for the build-up of His Supreme Godhood. It is the one aspect which combines in Krishna the Godhead of reasoning intellectuals and of emotional common folk. For the latter as Arjuna[42] remarks about Him, He is a friend of whom one can and does speak in the singular; for the former, He is the inspirer who puts questions and He is also the One who presents solutions of the very difficult questions discussed by wise and inquiring minds of India since about 1000 B.C.

This is Krishna as the charioteer of His friend and devotee Arjuna preaching to him the principles of conduct and its philosophical basis, encouraging him by all manner of persuation and energizing him to stand up for the battle to accomplish a great feat of moral significance. In this form Krishna is significantly called 'Parthasarathi', the 'charioteer of Partha', i.e. Arjuna. The 'Lord's song', '*Bhagavadgita*' of Parthasarathi or associated with Him, has been the solace of troubled souls, the tonic of weak hearts and the buttress of

martyrs.

The earliest known use of the great book *Bhagavadgita* as a source of solace, as recorded by the Kashmirian historian Kalhana in the middle of the 12th century A.D., was made by Avantivarman, the king of Kashmir about the 6th decade of the 9th century, on his death-bed. Avantivarman was all his life a devout Vaishnava but had concealed the fact from his people who were all Saivas. But he managed to breathe his last "listening to the *Bhagavadgita*" and "meditating on the light of Vishnu, he, perceiving the Supreme Soul, was released from life."[43]

It is a significant fact bringing out the cultural homogeneity of elite India that at sometime, not much earlier, in the South at Triplicane near Madras came into existence, though now apparently in disuse, the temple of Parthasarathi. The image is a standing one and has only two hands.[44] At Kanchi too there is a colossal image but in the sitting pose of this form. Tirupati has a shrine of Parthasarathi in the famous Govindaraja temple but is not under worship. The lofty 'gopura' tower of the Chennakesava temple at Pushpagiri in Cuddapah district bears a fine and fairly big representation of Krishna preaching the *Bhagavadgita* to Arjuna who is shown standing with folded hands to the left of Krishna.[45]

The assurance of the Lord that He will be born whenever there is need for Dharma being upheld, His insistence that one's Dharma has a priority of claim on one, His pronouncement that one must save oneself by himself and that He deals with all as they behave towards Him have made the *Lord's Song* a hunting ground for appropriate inspiration and a mine for talismans to all those who are faced with problems in which injustice and its iradication figure in relation to one's duty.

Kalhana again has obliged posterity by recording an episode which occurred in Kashmir in the reign of Jayasimha about A.D. 1140. The Brahmins of Srinagar having been harassed by some official who was a favourite of the king decided in a body to protest. In prosecution of that decision some Brahmins committed suicide. When the free pastures of the cattle were confiscated even a cowherd committed

suicide. These incidents incited a Brahmin youth to resolve to dispose of the hated official. Finding his opportunity he struck him with his short sword. The man thus struck reeled on the ground and swooned. The youth taking him to be dead desisted from striking him further. When a little later the official received succour and was presented before the king, the latter asked him in the presence of the crowd who his attacker was. The Brahmin youth who was in the crowd without waiting for identification declared that he was the man who struck the blow. When the person of the youth was searched by the royal officers, on his arm was found a little note inscribed: "To safeguard the righteous, for the destruction of evil doers and with a view to reinstate the sacred Law (Dharma) I come to life in each Yuga." This is the famous verse which has been referred to and also quoted above more than once as the assurance of the Lord. Even more significant than the bearing of the inscribed note by the youth is the following remark of Kalhana on it: "His affirmation, at the last moment, in virtue of this verse has sanctified him."[46]

R. S. Pandit, in his notes on the passage from *Rajatarangini,* has drawn attention to the parallel presented by the prominence given to and the use made of the *Bhagavadgita* by the early revolutionaries of Bengal at the time of Bengal partition and has also referred to Sir Valentine Chirol's pointed mention of the fact.

According to Valentine Chirol's[47] account the call to the *Bhagavadgita* as "not only the charter of Indian independence but the sanctification of the most violent means for the overthrow of an alien rule" was made by Arabindo Ghose after about 1903. But the proclamation of the arrival of "The Age of the Gita again in India" was made in an article in the Bengali newspaper *Yugantar* started in 1906 by Barendra Kumar Ghose, the brother of Arabindo Ghose, and Bhupendranath Dutt, the brother of Swami Vivekananda. In it the main substance of the famous verse mentioned above many times, a part of which was inscribed on his arm-note by the Kashmiri Brahmin youth of the 12th century, was stated in the most appealing and stirring language.

Thus has Parthasarathi-Krishna, the preacher of the

Bhagavadgita, enthralled the minds and quickened the senses of generations of Hindu elite. The stupendous number of books in almost all languages of the world which are either commentaries, translations or summaries of the great book bears testimony to its charm and power. And Krishna is the author of the book.

11

VISHNU PRESENTS THE IDEAL SOCIAL TYPE: THE MAN-GOD RAMA

Rama, the eldest son of the Ikshvaku king Dasaratha of Ayodhya, lived almost as many centuries before Krishna-Vasudeva, the younger of the two sons of Vasudeva the Vrishni nobleman of Mathura, as passed after Krishna got into regular worship before Rama. The fact that the twenty-four names of Vishnu which a twice-born person has to repeat daily and which for any person are believed to bring great merit do not include that of Rama testifies to Rama having been accepted as a Deity very late in the religious history of India. This is a very striking phenomenon, particularly because the great family of Ayodhya has had a very long continuity and was graced by many a great, noble and famous king. The family was so famous that long before Rama there is believed to have been one incarnation of Vishnu in it. In one account of incarnations of Vishnu, wherein about twenty-four are listed, Mandhata, the great sovereign ruler by all accounts, was an incarnation of Vishnu. Mandhata was the 24th descendant of Ikshvaku while Harischandra, the byeword for truthful promise in Indian literature and culture, was the 37th. Bhagiratha, another ancestor of Rama 22 generations above him is credited with having brought down the Ganga river by his penance and through the help of Siva made it flow through India. The sons of Sagara the 44th in the line are said to have dug out the ocean wherefore the latter is named 'Sagara', the 'issue of Sagara', in Samskrit. Rama's descendants or his brothers' descendants ruled over even many of the regions of Western part of Northern India for some generations at least. Krishna had no kingdom of his own. His parents and their ascendants were not illustrious. His descendants may be said to have been unimportant and were soon extinct. Though some of the descendants of the

Pandavas, who were Krishna's admirers and devotees, ruled over north-western part of U.P., the region in which Krishna had lived was evidently traversed over by wild tribes and barbaric ethnic groups.

It is the prestige of the great epic, *Mahabharata,* and also of the philosophical reputation of Krishna, though Krishna of the *Chhandogya Upanishad* (III, 17), the son of Devaki and a disciple of Ghora Angirasa, might or might not have been the same as Vasudeva-Krishna of the Vrishnis,[1] that must be the cause of the rise of Krishna to early Divinity. As Bhandarkar has pointed out the claim of Krishna for divine honours are best stated through the prestigious and majestic voice of Bhishma in the *Mahabharata.* Krishna is credited with something which makes him almost a learned Brahmin. Bhishma told his contemporaries that Krishna had full knowledge of the sacred Vedas and that he could also officiate as a sacrificial priest. It was as a learned, sanctified Brahmin qualified to be an intermediary between erring mortals and the immortal worlds or the supernatural powers that Krishna was presented by Bhishma to the distinguished gathering of the royal personages of his time.

Rama, on the other hand, has ever figured as the great bow-wielder, whose arrow is infallible and unreversible. The early accounts of Rama's life as narrated in the special book devoted to Him and named after Him, the epic *Ramayana,* Rama is more an infallible warrior than a Divinity. It is as the breaker of the great bow of Siva deposited with the kings of Mithila that Rama first made His mark as a very superior person. In the account of the encounter, after Rama's marriage with Sita, which took place between Him and Parasurama narrated at different times by different authors in different regions of India during a period of over seventeen centuries, the common statement recurring consistently is the assertion that the arrow put up to his bow by Rama must hit some target and that it cannot be deposited back into the arrow-case unused.

In the *Bhagavadgita* (X, 31) Lord Krishna, identifying Himself as the Supreme Soul with the best individual, object or quality of every class, selects Vishnu and Samkara as the best of the class of certain Divinities, Vasudeva as the best of the people called Vrishnis, and Rama as the best among

weapon-wielders. By Rama here has been understood Rama, the son of Dasaratha. Jnanesvara, the Maharashtrian saint poet-philosopher who completed his *Jnanesvari* in A.D. 1290 devotes four of his verses to explain the expression. He begins by referring to Rama as Sri Rama and ends by speaking of Him as Ramachandra—a name of Rama which is very significant, but, as far I can see, not attested before its use by the dramatist Bhavabhuti (*Mahaviracharita,* II, after verse 20)—the dearest one of Sita.

In the epic *Ramayana* of Valmiki, which in its main portion must be pre-Christian, wherein Rama's Divinity is neither recognized nor may be said to have been asserted, the occasion of the encounter with Parasurama is so timed that only the immediate family of Rama could see it. And the dialogue that took place between Rama and Parasurama is heavily redolent of ordinary humanity. Of course, the irrate and irascible Parasurama begins with a harsh reprimand and challenges Rama, offering Him the great bow, the bow of Vishnu, which Parasurama had with him, to a duel in archery. Rama, "who was restrained because of the presence of his father" rejoins with a sort of recognition of Parasurama's dutiful nature and the deeds that he accomplished, and straight tells him that he has underestimated Rama's Kshatriyahood and power. Rama adds that he will show his prowess and give a taste of it to Parasurama. Taking the bow from Parasurama and putting an arrow of his own to it, Rama indignantly said: "You are a Brahmin and hence I cannot let the arrow fly at you. I shall have to cut off either your power of unfettered and mental transportation and communication or the merit that you have acquired by your religious deeds. For this Vaishnava arrow cannot be futile and let off without a target." Parasurama sensing the situation, requested Rama to cut off his merit but not his power of movement. Rama let off His arrow and then offered Parasurama the worship due to a Brahmin. Parasurama on his part circumambulated Rama, an act of worship offered to God, and departed.[2]

This narration portrays a perfectly human Rama, with ideas of self-respect of a Kshatriya gentleman and the capacity for anger the necessary component of righteousness in man. It proclaims the infallibility of Rama's arrow, explaining

thereby why Rama figures as the greatest of weapon-wielders. As later ages have known Him, South India even naming temples with that appellation of His, Rama is 'Kodandadhari', 'bearer of the bow.'

Another episode in Rama's eventful life is his endeavour to cross the sea to Lanka or Ceylon. Two very touching and engrossing chapters describe the attempt to cross, the final assault on bridge-construction task, with its completion, and the successful crossing of the monkey-army to dare the lion of Ravana in his own den and to destroy the evil-doer. Rama's encounter with the sea, his intervention in the task of building the bridge occupy almost exactly a chapter and a half of these two chapters in section VI of the *Ramayana.* And in language and sentiment their equal, to my mind, cannot be met with even in the *Mahabharata* or the *Bhagavadgita.*

The doings of Rama and his address to the sea show him in the finest trim of a Kshatriya when challenged, a Rana Sangrama, a Rana Pratap or a Shivaji of later India. First, to propitiate the Sea, Rama lay fasting on the shore-sands for three days and nights. When on the expiry of the three-day-fast the Sea did not show 'Himself' to Rama, Rama got angry and with blood-shot red eyes he said to his brother Lakshmana who was standing by: "It is arrogance on the part of the Sea that 'He' should not show 'Himself' to me. The great moral virtues of restraint, forgiveness, soft speech and entreaty on the part of the good have no effect on vulgar and worthless people. It is the wicked, the self-extoller, the intruder, the pusher and the cruel punisher that people respect. Gentle and peaceful conduct cannot achieve fame; it cannot gain success, (much less) can it secure victory in a battle. Now, then, Oh Lakshmana, see how I dry up the sea with my arrows. The Sea evidently considers me a powerless man because I have resorted to genteel and peaceful manner. Oh Sumitra's son, bring my bow and arrows, I shall dry up the sea and the monkeys will pass over it with ease....." When Rama put up a particularly effective arrow to his bow and was about to release it, the Sea rose up in 'person' and addressed Rama: "Oh Raghava, the natural agencies like wind etc. keep to their assigned nature; and my nature is depth and plentiful water; I cannot depart from it;

no, not even out of love, gain or even fear; yet for your sake I shall show you the way to achieve your object of crossing over." Rama said: "Alright but what about this arrow of mine; it cannot be futile; it must have its victim." The Sea pointed out to Rama a part where he would be glad to have Rama's arrow achieving its aim.

Kalidasa in the fourth century A.D. described the Parasurama incident more or less as in the *Ramayana*. In the 11th canto of his *Raghuvamsa,* 'Lineage of Raghu', he devotes 33 verses to its narration. He makes the challenge of Parasurama more rude and offensive and the behaviour of Rama much more dignified and composed. Rama, Kalidasa tells his readers, just smiled with his lower lip quivering a bit and silently took the offered bow and strung it with ease. This masterly action was enough to unnerve the irascible Parasurama. Rama, however, put his arrow to the bow and spoke: "Though you have insulted me I cannot blandly shoot the arrow at you because you are a Brahmin. Now do tell me if I should kill your movement or your merit-won world:" Parasurama's reply is not only an entreaty as in the *Ramayana* but is also a recognition of Rama's being the 'Ancient Purusha', the Supreme or Primeval Being come to earth leaving His Vaishnava abode, stated in the form of a lame excuse. Rama according to Kalidasa, having shot the arrow as desired by Parasurama, touched the feet of the sage and begged his pardon. There was, according to Kalidasa, a sound normal reason for so doing. For the powerful ones a bow to their enemies defeated by might brings fame. Evidently Kalidasa desired to portray his Rama as a gentle person, neither much ruffled nor much angered by others and as one who respected age and other social criteria of respect almost to the letter. Such a Rama may justly be called Ramachandra, Rama who is cool like the moon. The encounter with the sea is passed over by Kalidasa. His predecessor, the dramatist Bhasa in his play *Abhisheka,* 'coronation', makes the Lord of the sea without the least chiding from Rama present Himself in person and praise Him as Narayana and tell Him how best to cross the sea.

Bhavabhuti's treatment of the Parasurama episode portrays Rama as much more human and prone to taunt than

Kalidasa's or even Valmiki's Rama. Evidently for his dramatic technique Bhavabhuti required such a Rama; but the whole scene is too prolonged and prolix. In introducing Parasurama straight into the inner apartment Bhavabhuti's intention evidently was to present Parasurama in worse light than usual. How finally Rama subdued the sage we are not told because that part of the action takes place behind the curtain. The sea-crossing episode does not occur, the whole action being shortened.

Tulasidasa, singing and chanting in the fourth quarter of the 16th century partly from Ayodhya and partly from Varanasi, follows to some extent the model of Krishna's life and makes Rama on His birth appear in His Vishnu-form. It is only after His mother Kausalya asked Him to change His form to the one proper for a child that He did so. His description of Parasurama episode (I, 8, 312-30) is long and it takes place, as in Bhavabhuti's account, in the marriage pandal of Janaka's palace. The taunting, satirizing etc. is done by Lakshmana, and Rama intervenes at the end. At that stage, Parasurama though burning with rage begins to be conscious of the Divinity of Rama. He says that he would like to have an actual proof only of his prowess and offers the Vaishnava bow to be strung by Rama. Rama strings it but does not put any arrow and Parasurama sings Rama's praise and takes his leave of the gathering. In the Rama-and-the-sea incident Tulasidasa has followed Valmiki's text in all its essentials and sentiments, the last of which relates to Rama's arrow and its inevitable end in getting at its target (V, 6, 60-63).

Another idea and sentiment about Rama is that He was the most ideal monarch and that in His kingdom and during His rule every kind of goodness and happiness prevailed. The establishment of what is called Ramarajya, the rule of Rama, has been held as the ideal of the Indian people in their endeavour of regaining their independence and though not stated in so many explicit words in the Constitution of India was the ideal that inspired the leading framers of it.

In all accounts, from Valmiki's onwards, of Rama's life he is shown as constantly engaged either by himself or/and with his brothers in fighting the anti-Vedic-Brahmanic ele-

ments in the whole of India east of Rajasthan, west of Bengal from the Himalayas in the North to Kanya Kumari (Cape Comorin) in the South. Rama was, in actual history perhaps and has been in the belief-system certainly the warrior-hero who followed in the wake of the peaceful Brahmin ascetic prospectors and bearers of the Vedic-Brahmanic culture to free them from the molestation of the local and even distant populace opposed to the ideas and practices of that culture. In this endeavour he not only disposed of various demons but also brought on Ravana's enmity which led to Sita's abduction. The search for Sita was attended by integration of the semi-Brahmanised inhabitants of Southern India and led to the full Brahmanization of the Ceylonese. This stupendous task achieved by Rama when properly realized by posterity was idealized into the Rama-complex of beneficent rule.

Valmiki (*Ramayana, VI,* 128, 89-104) describes Rama's reign in glowing terms: "There were no widows to moan their fate; there was no danger from beasts, nor from diseases. The society was rid of all thieves; none did untoward act. Children did not die and older people had not to carry out funerary rites for younger people. Everybody was joyful and devoted to duty. Following Rama, none tried to injure another. For thousands of years people were free from diseases and sorrows; trees flowered and bore fruit continuously. Rainfall was ideally suited to needs and winds always cooling. Citizens went about their proper tasks through inner urge and did not require to be goaded. All people were truthful and devoted to Dharma."

The *Harivamsa,*[3] which is manifestly a laud of Krishna, holds up the long reign of Rama as the most righteous time on earth, using almost the same expressions as the *Ramayana.* The *Vayupurana,*[4] which again is partial to Krishna and disposes Rama in two lines in its narration of the incarnations of Vishnu, devotes more than twenty-five lines to him as a scion of the family of Vaivasvata Manu. It is stated there that Rama ruled for a very long period and that in his kingdom everywhere the chants of the three Vedas, Rig, Yajus and Sama, were heard without a break and people gave and people ate to their hearts' content. Rama founded new king-

doms in the west, north and south. And the traditionalists, we are told, chanted the 'gatha', verse, that "in Rama all truth and fundamentals were concentrated through his greatness and intelligence."

Kalhana, the historian of Kashmir, writing in the middle of the 12th century A.D., narrates an incident which took place in the reign of king Chandrapida about A.D. 682. On the orders of the king for the construction of a Vishnu temple in Srinagar, his officials fixed upon certain site for it. And though on a part of it there stood the hut-like structure of a leather worker, they decided to use the site after removing the hut. The cobbler or tanner was not the kind of docile beings that Chamars in later times have been represented to have been; nor was his king the kind of tyrannical monarchs to whom later Kashmir and India got accustomed. The tanner directly petitioned to the king and pleaded his case before him, pointing out that even a hut, if it is an ancient one, is a home of which one cannot easily get rid mentally. The introduction or the preamble of the tanner's plaint is what is material for us here. It runs: "I am not less than a dog nor is the king greater than Ramachandra." The greatest and the mightiest king Ramachandra in the imagery of the cobbler would give audience to and treat it better than what the cobbler was being given. Surely Ramachandra,—note the use of the appellation Ramachandra, which if it was actually used by the tanner would show its usage to be earlier than that of Bhavabhuti's i.e. the 8th century, and if not, then is perhaps the second authentic one in literary sources—was the most righteous king known to the common humanity of India, if not in the 7th century then at least in the 12th. A century and half later, Maharashtrian Jnanesvara in praising the Yadav king of his time for his righteous rule called him Sri Ramachandra (*Jnanesvari*, XVIII, 1804).

The sentiment that the rule of Rama was the most ideal and made for full happiness and for righteous behaviour of all has reverberated through the appealing tones of Tulasidasa[5] from the 17th century till today: "Even the material objects in the realm of Ayodhya, let alone the living ones, appeared superior to the gods themselves."

From Bhasa's works it is clear that Rama must have been

deified at least about the beginning of the Christian era. But there has not been discovered any sculptural or other material trace of either his deification or of any important events in his career that can be dated earlier than the 6th century A.D. The representation of scenes, including perhaps of His having worked the miracle of turning out Ahalya from a piece of rock when his feet touched it, occur in the Gupta-age temple at Deogadh in Jhansi division.[6]

A Vakataka king by name Pravarasena, who was not only a contemporary of Kalidasa but is also surmised to have been his pupil, narrated Rama's life in the Prakrit poem *Setu-bandha,* 'the building of the bridge.' To his mother goes the credit, as far as our current knowledge can assure us, of having built the first temple dedicated to Rama.[7] She ruled for sometime as the dowager queen. She was the daughter of the far-famed Gupta monarch, Chandragupta II, the one who is the Vikramaditya *par excellence* of Indian tradition. And though the Jain author of the lexicon, *Amarakosa,* does not name Rama among the Gods, and Varahamihira in this *Brihatsamhita* only cursorily and almost casually mentions some of the measurements of a Rama image, according to Kalhana's testimony there existed a temple of Ramaswamin at Parihasapura in Kashmir dating from before the end of the first quarter of the 8th century A.D. The fact that it remained without any idol since about A.D. 725 to Kalhana's own time, A.D. 1150, after the idol was, by mistake, destroyed by the Gaudas in revenge, shows that the cult of Rama was not well-established in Kashmir.

At Sirpur in the former Central Provinces a shrine of about the 8th century A.D. with images of Rama and Buddha side by side is recorded by H. Krishna Sastri.[9] Scenes from Rama's life are sculptured in the Indrasabha at Verula (Ellora).[10]

That the Rama cult and the worship of Rama began to gather strength about the 11th century and that too in the region of the eastern part of the former Central Provinces and Orissa is rendered probable by the available evidence.

The endeavour begun by Bhasa and by his greater successor Kalidasa through his poetry was taken up by the poet-dramatist from Nagpur region or from region a little to its

northwest, the orthodox Brahmin Bhavabhuti, in the 8th century with great vigour and zest. Bhavabhuti wrote three dramas, all of which we know from their introductions, were enacted at the time of the annual festival held in honour of Siva. How often the dramas were repeated we do not know. But from the fact of their having been produced at the time of an annual religious fair-festival we may conclude that their zone of appeal was both deep and extensive. Two of the dramas deal with Rama's life. The *Mahaviracharita* portrays the events in his life which culminated in his marriage and his encounter with Parasurama and reached upto his exile from Ayodhya and meet with the monkey-kings. The outcome of this meet, the disposal of Vali the elder brother of Sugriva and other events are known to have been dealt with by another person who completed the drama.

It is Bhavabhuti's other play, the *Uttararamacharita,* which is not only his complete drama on Rama, not only a powerful presentation of the events, not only a work with some of the most appealing poetry in Samskrit language but also one which to me appears to stress the tragic in the story of Rama and Sita. Rightly has the poet-dramatist himself given this clue to his work in his assertion that, though in technical works on poetics and dramatics nine flavours or sentiments are recognised, in reality there is only one supreme over all and that is the sentiment of Pathos, 'karuna.' Rama's plight, Sita's trials and the bold but boyish behaviour of the twin sons of Rama all conjure up a picture of domestic activity—beautiful yet pathetic, valorous yet trying. In this picture of the husband and the wife and later their twin sons, who being born to their mother while she was in exile were not known to the father as his sons, also figures in his proper place the self-reliant yet self-abnegating younger brother who carries out his painful duties with fortitude, subduing his pangs.

The next dramatic representation of Rama's life extant is the work of one Murari Misra who lived in the latter part of the 11th century at the court of a Kalachuri king. It is called *Anargha Raghava,* 'Invaluable Raghava'. It too was performed at an annual fair-festival. And the festival was held in honour of Purushottam, i.e. it was a Vaishnava fair-

festival. In this connection it should be noted that the earliest reference to a 'yatra' or fair-festival of Vishnu occurs in the plates of one Bhogasakti, discovered at Anjaneri near Trimbak in Nasik district, which are dated in the Kalachuri Chedi era and were inscribed in A.D. 710-11. It was a long festival lasting for a whole fortnight in the lunar month of Margasirsha.[11]

The Rewa inscription of the Kalachuri king Malayasimha of about the 11th century, extols the worship of Rama though Malayasimha himself who is described as a Siddhartha Yogi was a Saiva.[12] In A.D. 1145 one Jayapala repaired an old temple of Vishnu, which was built in the 8th century, at Rajim, 29 miles south-east of Raipur and dedicated it to Rama.[13] The reconstruction of an old temple into a new one of another Deity clearly indicates that Rama cult had begun to replace the purely Vishnu cult in the region east of Nagpur tract. An inscription from Rewa in the reign of the Kalachuri king Vijayasimha and dated A.D 1193 mentions a temple of Rama.[14]

It is stated about Chakradhara,[15] the great founder of the Manabhava sect that in the year A.D. 1223 he left his home for Riddhipura in Vidarbha on the pretext of a pilgrimage to some famous centre of Rama-cult, which must have, evidently been on that side in the region about Nagpur.

Before proceeding further with the history of the actual spread of Rama-worship I should like to draw the readers' pointed attention to a social phenomenon which I think had at least something to do with this spread from about the middle of the 12th century A.D. As I have stated elsewhere[16] the two great Hindu jurists of the age, the ascetic Vijnanesvara from Marathwada in the last quarter of the 11th century and the judge Jimutavahana from Bengal only a few years later were attempting to interpret old texts in a manner to meet the social challenge of the age. It was evidently the institution of joint or extended family that, under the impact of newer ideas of individual property and perhaps also under the hammer of Islam, had begun to show stresses and strains. Jimutavahana was almost wholly in favour of stabilizing the institution and made a change in the law of inheritance and succession which, as later centuries have demonstrated, suc-

ceeded in achieving the end. Vijnanesvara, the ascetic, was too much in favour of individual responsibility and worth and went another way. Rama is never worshipped singly, though some iconological texts have given instructions with respect only to Rama image, but is always accompanied by at least Lakshmana and Sita, very often also by Rama's attendant Hanuman and sometimes especially in pictures and painting also with His two other brothers, the ever-dear Bharata, evoking softest memories and tenderest feelings, and Satrughna. May it be that the cult of Rama centred round the joint family, suiting the social challenge of the time, was eagerly sponsored by the religious and social elite of the time?

Anyway there is no evidence of Rama-worship or Rama-cult having reached South India before the time of the dualist philosopher Madhva Anandatirtha. Anandatirtha is said to have brought the image of Digvijaya Rama—this appellation of Rama is significant but not met with afterwards—from Badarikasram in the Himalayas. And having cultivated devotion to the Rama-cult, he sent one of his most famous disciples, Naraharitirtha to Orissa to bring from there the 'original' idols of Rama and Sita.[17] According to another tradition the Orissan or rather Kalinga idols of Rama and Sita were disused; and evidently Anandatirtha desired to resuscitate their worship.[18] This brings us to about the end of the 13th century and we find Bengal reached by Rama-cult. One Jayadeva who died about A.D. 1300 wrote the sixth drama in Sanskrit on Rama's life known as *Prasanna Raghava*.

But the great era of Rama-cult began in North India about the time the internal havoc caused by Islamic rulers was consistant, persistent and terrific. The sponsor of it was the ascetic Ramananda who is commonly believed to have been born in A.D. 1300.

R. G. Bhandarkar[19] concluded half a century ago that Ramananda introduced three reforms in the field of religion and Hindu social polity. First, he ruled that any devotee of Vishnu was a good enough person to be admitted into his religious sect irrespective of the caste to which he belonged. Thus the low and the despised were admitted as equals in the eyes of God in his Vaishnavism. In this connection, attention may be drawn to a Hindi saying attributed to him which runs:

"Jati pati puchai nahi koi, Hariko bhajai so Harika hoi", 'nobody cares for anyone's caste, everyone who is devoted to Hari becomes Hari's own'. Second, Ramananda is said to have favoured the use of the vernacular for the propagation of his creed, thus further helping the process of integration of the folk-element into the body social. And the third reform made by him was "the introduction of the purer and more chaste worship of Rama and Sita instead of that of Krishna and Radha." Ramananda seems to have achieved all this, perhaps a consistent plan of integration which was further developed afterwards by some disciples of the creed by instituting the orders of ascetics ready to fight to preserve temples and Hindu religion against the onslaught of Islamic rulers of India, within about half a century of the time when Allauddin Khilji had annihilated all Hindu resistance from one end of the country to the other and had made and administered laws designed to emasculate the Hindus.

Ramananda had managed to gain enough prestige even with one of the Tughluk kings to enable him to secure some concessions in the matter of the practice of religion.[20]

No doubt at all that Ramananda put Rama-cult and Rama-worship on its forward career. The Maharashtrian saint-poet Namadev, whose preceptor Visoba Khechara was a Saiva, who is known to have been one of the juniors among the Vaishnava circle of Jnanesvara, was a great pilgrim. It is possible that in his perigrinations he came across the devotees and propagators of Rama-cult in Prayag and elsewhere in North India. However it may be, we meet with the importance of repeating the name of Rama as a form of worship calculated to lead to salvation fervently stated by Namadev, though not of course to the exclusion of his favourite Deity Vithoba of Pandharpur. And Namadev is said to have died in A.D. 1350.

Rama-worship was the central doctrine of Kabir's preaching but his Rama must be formless and not an idol. Thus though Ramananda is said to have had thirteen disciples, as we find no evidence of their work and influence, we must conclude that the long period between A.D. 1400 and 1560, when Tulasidasa's great work begins to tell and when perhaps the Vedantic ascetic Madhusudana Sarasvati had also

begun his work of organization, was devoid of any outstanding religious figure toiling in the cause of Rama-worship in North India. Nor have we any evidence of such a leader doing it in South India. Nevertheless the leaven must have been working for we know that a magnificent temple dedicated to Rama known as Hazara Rama was begun by Krishna-Deva-Raya of Vijayanagar in A.D. 1513. The stupendous structure was not completed.[21]

The third quarter of the 16th century stabilized the Rama cult and worship and gave it a great fillip in Northern India but for which in all probability Krishnaism would have overwhelmed it. For in the period intervening from Ramananda's death, the great Krishna devotees like Vallabhacharya, Mirabai and Suradasa had boosted it with the help of the erotic appeal through Krishna's lady-love Radha. And it was an effective soporific and convenient escapism for a people who were sorely tried for more than three centuries by the tyrannical rule and cruel exactions of the Muslim rulers and invaders.

Tulasidasa was born in A.D. 1531 and died in A.D. 1622. He completed his great work *Ramacharitamanasa* in A.D. 1577. It has ever been read or rather sung by hundreds and thousands for the appealing incidents of Rama's life and for the moral and religious philosophy it embodies. For Tulasi's *Ramayana* has tried to do for Rama-cult what in part at least *Mahabharata* and *Harivamsa* had done for that of Krishna.

In Maharashtra it appears that Ekanatha, A.D. 1533-1599, two years younger than Tulasidasa, wrote his *Bhavartha-Ramayana* in about A.D. 1570. Whatever that book might have achieved for Rama-cult in Maharashtra, whether it was much read or not, in popular appeal it was completely superseded by *Ramavijaya* written by Sridhara in A.D. 1703. Apart from the soft and sweet language of Sridhara, the progress of Rama-cult under the systematic and fostering care of the ascetic Ramadasa, A.D. 1608-1682, who was a protagonist of the Rama-cult in Maharashtra in a militant form, helped the spread. His disciples wherever they went for alms used to chant the manly distich, "Who is there who can look with disfavour at a servant of the mighty one, whose work the three worlds praise. He, whose protege is Ramadasa, never neglects us. Victory, victory to the mighty hero of the family of

Raghu." The formula breathes complete resignation and is so much associated with Ramadasa and his disciples that in later times till today, and perhaps also in his age, Ramadasa has been known to Maharastrians as Samartha Ramadasa or even simply as Samartha, 'the mighty one' *par excellence*. So much self-confidence this ascetic saint was able to infuse among the Maharastrians. Of course the simultaneous rise of Shivaji and his stirring deeds, his miracle-like achievements and his patronage of the great ascetic helped the formation of this estimate.

The contrast in the contents of the preaching and the method and manner of propaganda of their dear causes between Ramadasa and the great saint-poet Tukarama, who though born in the same year as Ramadasa unfortunately died prematurely thirty-three years before him, ought to make it clear that the work of the Maharashtrian saints and religious preachers from about the middle of the 13th century onwards till Ramadasa was like that of the preachers in Northern India, with the sole exception of Ramananda. It was an emmolient application and an escapist approach. The preachers were oblivious of the realities of their society and intensely gave themselves away, perhaps in their unconsciously realized despair, to devotion such as could be practised even in private households, trusting to God to save the Hindu society and its Deities from Muslim persecution. Sometimes, as in the case of Narasimha Sarasvati, who died about A.D. 1458, great men with extraordinary capacity for religious experience were able to extract some religious concessions from some of the Mulslim rulers who were prepared to condescend. And that was enough for them.[22]

It is Ramadasa[23] who spoke of the Mlecchas, their oppression and the need for eradicating them and toook steps to start institutions at various places where his disciples must have preached the same gospel. Like their teacher they must have called upon the people of Maharashtra to wake up and organize themselves for resistance. In his *Dasabodha* more than once he speaks of men establishing religious order as incarnations of God and not only assures that they will take place but implies in one place at least that Shivaji, whose patron Deity was Goddess Bhavani of Tuljapur and whose

idol he got installed at Pratapgad at the hands of Ramadasa, was such a one. Even the soft, quiet and forbearing Tukarama voiced strength in his Maharashtra through his panegyric of Hanumanta.

It is a problem for further study or perhaps only for conjecture and contemplation that in spite of Ramadasa's fervent and persistent propaganda in favour of Rama and His factotum Hanuman or Maruti it is the latter whose shrines are met with in the villages of Maharashtra, particularly the Deccan.

The religious centre of Pandharpur has six shrines for Maruti but only three for Rama. Two of the shrines are situated within the precincts of private compounds and are known by the qualifying term in the form of the names of their owners. One of them, the Holkar Rama, was built by Ahalyabai Holkar respected all over Maharashtra as Sati Ahalyabai to be a pious lady.[24] One of the finest of the temple-complexes, perhaps the finest, of Poona is what is known as the Tulasi Baga temple of which the principal and the largest one is that of Rama. It was built by the 3rd Peshwa in A.D. 1761,[25] the year of the greatest trial of Maratha national consciousness, courage, bravery and fortitude.

In spite of the work of Ramadasa and his disciples, in spite of the *Ramayanas,* in Marathi, of Ekanatha and Sridhara and though the fast-festival of Rama's ninth, mentioned already by Hemadri,[26] was introduced in Maharashtra or rather attempted to be popularised in Maharashtra by Ramadasa and his disciples, it is a fact that Rama-cult, and Rama temples are not much in evidence even in towns and are very much less so in villages of Maharashtra. The older gods, Siva, Bhairav, Vetala and the Devis have continued their hold over the people with their older temples. Krishna appeals through many channels, Vithoba through the fervour and piety of a galaxy of saints and preachers, Datta through the miracle-working of the first promulgators and their modern and even contemporary congeners. Against this competition Rama's sombre social type may and does catch the popular mind but not sufficiently to endow new temples. Perhaps also the temple-building impulse of the people has been on the wane for sometime past.

In my native town of Malvan, there are only two Rama temples, one a small one and the other a fitting though not very grand structure. But both to the best of my knowledge, at least one certainly, were built not earlier than the beginning of the 20th century. In the nearby town of Vengurla, where there are half a dozen domed temples of Siva and Devi and one of Vithoba and one of Datta almost contemporaneous with the Siva ones, there is only one Rama temple built by a widow in the beginning of the 20th or at the end of the 19th century and that has not been kept in good condition, nor has received much attention of the people.

In Poona, the heart of Maharashtra, at the beginning of the 19th century—Poona of the time of Bajirav II—there were altogether 21 images of Rama but only 11 temples, some of the images having evidently been in the open or in private houses. In 1956, the Municipal register of the places of worship in Poona showed 19 Rama temples. This increase in Rama temples compares rather unfavourably with the advance made not only by Hanuman, the factotum of Rama, but also by Datta and Vithoba and even by Ganapati and Bhairava.

The estimate of the temples of various Deities in Haveli taluka, at the centre of which stands Poona, as gathered in an enquiry started by me has already been presented in an earlier chapter. Readers can see from figures given there that Rama temples are reported from only 13 villages and they number 14 out of about 350 temples in 120 villages. Datta is the only important Deity, leaving out Krishna for reasons which will be clear in the chapter on Vithoba and Datta, who has lagged behind Rama in Haveli taluka.

In Jaipur, almost in the heart of the region of Krishnaism, Rama has done better than in Poona, the heart of the region of Siva-Bhairav, Maruti or Hanuman, Vithoba and Ganapati worship. In a total of 296 temples Krishna has 123 and Rama 42 as against 55 claimed by Siva. Even Saurashtra, the land of Siva, to judge by the record of its centre Rajkot, has done by Rama better than rural Maharashtra and even Poona. At Rajkot, Rama has at least four shrines though they are all in the precincts of Siva temples, the total number of temples in the city being 22. But my impression and oral information from friends lead me to assert that Rajkot in this point is not

typically representative. In Gujarat Rama-worship, on the whole, is much less common than in Maharashtra. It is however, more wide-spread than in Bengal. Among the 50 temples noted in the *Gazetteers* of Hooghly, Manbhum, Nadia and Santal Parganas districts of which the presiding Deities have been mentioned there are only 2 Rama temples. One of them, that in the Santal Parganas[27] district, we are informed, was built between 1782-1793.

Turning to South India one cannot fail to admire the excellent and impressive images of the famous group Rama, Lakshmana and Sita—they are the three who went on their enforced exile, lived a life of toil and worry, went through many a torturing trial, and emerging victorious gained for Aryan culture the South—in the famous Ramesvara temple at Ramesvara, almost the southern end of India.[28] All of them are two-armed, both Rama and Lakshmana with their sinuously powerful bow held in their left hands and Sita with a lotus in her right hand. The South Indian temples of Rama are very recent. In fact Srinivasan referring to them as being "innumerable in Telugu and Tamil speaking areas" and asserting that "ancient temples dedicated to this deity are few only" opines that there were many of them constructed after the Maratha rule was established in the South.[29] It also appears that as Srinivasan himself has pointed out most of them happen to be shrines within the precincts of the larger Vishnu or Vaishnava temples.[30] That some of them must be definitely older than the Maratha rule in the South—and before attributing even the later Rama temples to Maratha influence it should be borne in mind that the Vijayanagara monarchs were earlier and stauncher devotees of Rama to judge by their endeavours in erecting magnificent temples to that Deity in their home-domains—is clear from the date to which the Ramaswami temple at Kumbhakonam in Tanjore district is ascribed. It is believed to have been constructed by a Nayak king of Tanjore in the 16th century.[31]

The paucity of independent temples of Rama in South India is clear from the evidence available in some of the *District Gazetteers.* Thus among the 95 temples separately mentioned in the *Gazetteer of Tanjore* district[32] there are only three which are dedicated to Rama or Ramaswami as He is

called in the South. One of them is very recent, being built about A.D. 1865. Among the 14 Vishnu temples recorded in the *District Gazetteer of Salem*, there is not one for Rama. It appears that Rama cult and worship is more widespread in Andhradesa than in Tamilnad. In the *Manual of Nellore District*[33] written in A.D. 1873 at least two places are recorded as known for the annual festival in honour of Kodanda Ramaswami in April, at one of which 8000 persons gathered together for the occasion. In Cuddapah district the record of about the same time lists 2 Ramaswami temples among the 14 mentioned.[34]

Rama's 9th is a public holiday; it appears in all States of the Union. It is the bright 9th of the lunar month of Chaitra and falls in April. Rama is traditionally known to have been born on that day. It is observed both as a fast and as a festival. The festival of birth is today more a group-function than an individual or family affair. It appears from whatever history of this religious fast-festival can be gathered that in Maharashtra when Ramadasa introduced it or promulgated its practice outside his temple 'maths', temple-monasteries, it was celebrated by well-to-do persons who were inclined to Rama-cult. In Poona, for example, even so late as A.D. 1800, i.e. about hundred and twenty years after Ramadasa's death, as recorded in a note in the Peshwa's Daftar,[35] of the 14 celebrations of the festival in the city certainly one only, that in the Tulasibag temple, and perhaps one more that by a Ramadasi Gosavi are the only ones which were group-functions of a public nature. The remaining 12 were observed by individuals. Today though some private celebrations are held, Rama's 9th is more an event celebrated in the local temples and hence a group-function. In Andhradesa as testified to by the old district-account it is a temple-celebration. It is also a group-event on caste basis. Thus the Madigas, the Banajigas, the Besthas and the Kapus are known to celebrate the day, collecting the local caste people either in the local temple, or elsewhere as in the case of the Madigas, putting up a picture of Rama for the occasion.[36]

In Northern India the more famous hilarious festival occurs in the lunar month of Asvin along with the Navaratri festival. It is the commemoration of Rama's invasion of

Lanka and is known as Ramalila. It ends in a grand processional function.

Rama's life, as already pointed out, has been written upon and dramatized from age to age in Samskrit and later in vernaculars. The principal actors in the drama besides Rama, Lakshmana and Sita, who form the central core, are Rama's father, his mother and step-mothers and his step-brothers. The conduct of Bharata, his affectionate and reverential regard for Rama, the way he carried on the administration on behalf of Rama during the latter's term of exile are some of the most touching episodes of brotherly love. Hanuman's role and position in the group will be clearer in a later chapter. These are the persons figuring in the Rama-complex of cult-worship. But the more appealing presence of Rama's twin sons, their great musical performance in the recitation of *Ramayana,* and their greater military achievement in defeating at the age of twelve all the Raghava heroes and their colleagues, the great monkeys, in connection with the capture of the sanctified horse roaming about in fulfilment of the requirements of the 'horse-sacrifice' which Rama had started, have no place in it. Nor are they to my knowledge sculptured or even painted (?) anywhere. As will be briefly mentioned later, the martial exploits were described for the first time by the dramatist Bhavabhuti, four or five centuries after the composition of the current *Ramayana* of Valmiki. They were duly incorporated in his epic by Tulasidasa in the seventeenth century.

I shall not go into any of these interesting episodes which are even instructive from the viewpoint of the sociology of religion and for the view hazarded here regarding the connection between social needs on the one hand and the use of Rama-story and the spread of Rama-cult on the other. Space permits a brief discussion of some incidents, and actions of Rama whose morality is a moot point and as such have evoked differential treatment of the incidents or/and prompted different arguments in the ages succeeding the composition of the original text.

One incident in Rama's life which reflects very unfavourably on his ethical personality is his killing of the monkey-chief Vali. He did this while the latter was locked in fight

with his younger brother Sugriva on the latter's challenge at the instigation and guarantee of Rama, shooting his fatal arrow from behind a tree. Justification of this unmartial conduct of his afterwards given by Rama[37] must leave the readers of the original not only cold but staggered with disapproval. Some of it is palpable untruth and part of it a very early archetype of disgusting colonialism. Whatever the rights or wrongs of fighting with Vali, or rather the desire to dispose of Vali, the perpetration of the deed from behind a tree is indefensible under the chivalrous code of any time and place. Of course, there was no proclamation of a feud by Rama or Vali between them. Under the circumstance, the whole episode potrays Rama in a far-from ideal mould!

Bhavabhuti, the Samskrit dramatist of the 8th century, learned and prone to be meticulous, must have fully realized the degrading nature of the situation. For he took the bold step of changing the whole context before the actual occurrence of the incident.[38] He concocted an offence-alliance between Vali and Ravana and has stated through the agency of two of the near relatives of Ravana that Vali was pledged to Ravana to dispose of Rama. With a dramatic device usual in such cases the announcement is made within the hearing of Rama and Lakshmana. Even the proclaimed enmity of Vali cannot justify his being shot at from behind a tree. It can exonerate Rama only of gross and unprovoked misconduct!

Tulasidasa[39] has not accepted this emendation, nor has he introduced any other. He has relied on the duty of helping a friend in dire distress, in the discharge of which, the source of such distress, being on its very proving immoral, becomes a legitimate target for disposal. In the first bout of Vali and Sugriva Rama kept aloof and behaved as a mere spectator; and Sugriva had to flee for life. On being accosted by Sugriva, Rama told him that he could not distinguish between the two as they looked almost identical and encouraged him to challenge Vali a second time. On this accasion Rama bedecked Sugriva with a garland to distinguish him from his brother Vali and also kept himself concealed behind a tree. From his hiding place Rama shot the arrow at Vali as he was locked in fight with Sugriva on this occasion. With a much shorter argument or rather with a sharp reprimand from Rama, Vali

is represented as not only having acknowledged the justice of the capital punishment in the manner executed but also as having expressed his desire to be blessed by Rama! Rama's divinity having been completely established and piously accepted, Tulasidasa evidently had no problems or could not permit questionings about the God's doings!

There are three occasions on which Rama's conduct in regard to his wife Sita excites one's reason to scan it on the background of Rama as a moral individual, Rama as a loving and dutiful husband and Rama as a dutiful and an ideal monarch vis-a-vis his subjects. And all the three of them of course concern Sita as a dutiful wife and also Sita as a self-respecting individual personality.

Of these, the very first occasion is the worst for Rama judged either as a loving husband or as a moral personality. The juncture is such a psychological moment that anything remotely like what is put in the mouth of Rama by Valmiki would have jarred on refined ears and hurt sensibility. Rama, after killing Ravana, sends Hanuman from the battle-field to inform Sita of the event and to wish her, asking him to bring back Sita's message. This last injunction itself sounds strange as it comes from a dearly loving husband to a most dutiful, affectionate and self-effacing wife, who implored, beseeched and proudly secured the honour of accompanying her husband on a life of extreme difficulty, peril and misery to extend over an exile of 14 years, after she had been forcibly abducted and was subjected to a most miserable and agonizing imprisonment for almost a whole year by a well-known fiend. But this injunction, strange as it sounds, is nothing compared to what later actually happened on the battle-field when Sita, who was naturally brought in a palanquin was made to walk up to Rama at his instruction or rather command. Sita desires very naturally to go joyfully to the side of her husband Rama from whom she was separated so long. Not only Rama himself does not evince such eagerness, not only does he not respond to Sita's advance even in an ordinary dignified way, but also he actually repudiates Sita in what cannot but be described as cruel, pompous and reprehensible speech and manner.

Valmiki has devoted more than 110 verses to narrate the message of Rama, Sita's arrival on the battlefield, her approach

and Rama's reproach and disavowal.[40] Says Rama (*Ramayana, VI,* 115, 2-24): "Oh, good one, I won you after vanquishing the foe; I have done what was necessary to do for manliness; I have thereby cleared myself of an affront and a shame. This achievement itself is an adequate return for my effort; for thereby I have fulfilled my vow. This arduous and risky endeavour I did not undertake for your sake, may it be known to you, but in clearance of my honour and the prestige of my family. You whose character is now in doubt, owing to your stay in the house of Ravana, standing so in front of me hurt me as does light the eyes of one who is suffering from sore eyes. Go away; go as and where you please; I have no use for you. What noble person of character will accept a wife as his own when she had been under the evil eyes of a person like Ravana in his own house? By winning you back I have achieved what I had set my heart on; I have no attachment towards you; you may live with Lakshmana, Bharata, Satrughna or even with the monkey Sugriva or the demon Bibhishana. Is it possible that with your resplendent beauty Ravana should have left you untouched in his own house?"

Sita naturally weeps bitterly at the sudden shock and rapier-thrust from her husband and is almost unconscious for some time; but soon collecting herself, her moral personality, comprehends the situation and retorts though mildly. Says Sita:[41] "Oh, hero, why do you like a common man speak to me these harsh and unbecoming words? I am not as you think me to be a fallen woman. I will perform a test of my chastity in your presence and convince you. If my limbs came into contact with the person of another man than you that happened under circumstances beyond my control and without my either desiring it or liking it. If you do not understand me I am as good as dead. And if you were not sure about my character why, oh king, did you not repudiate me when you sent your observer Hanuman to me in Lanka? You have forgotten your vows made to me at marriage, just as much as you have ignored my character and my devotion to you. I will enter fire." So saying she asked Lakshmana to light up a huge fire, which the latter did only after receiving his brother's consent. On Sita's throwing herself into the

blazing fire, all gathered there raised a sorrowful hue and cry. But a celestial voice and phenomenon intervening reminded Rama that He was Vishnu incarnate and asked Him how He could allow pure Sita to be burnt to ashes. At the end of this address of Brahma, Fire God got up with Sita intact, in effulgent splendour and offered her to Rama, assuring Him that she was wholly attached to Rama and was protected by her own inherent power against any transgression by Ravana. Rama accepted her adding that He too knew that Sita was pure; yet he did not accept her because "if he had done so without her purification people would have taunted him as a woman-mad person."[42]

Neither Kalidasa nor Bhavabhuti directly refers to the incident, it being too much of a detail for their literary ends.

Tulasidasa[42] in spite of his unquestioning faith in the Supreme Godhood of Rama seems to have felt something odd about the long disquisition of Valmiki and Rama's part in it. He devotes only about 30 lines to the first part and about 20 to the latter part of the episode. There are none of the harsh words actually used but only suggested; and a sort of an explanation is offered. It is that Sita was, so to say, a deposit with Fire and must therefore be handed over by the Fire-God. Sita on her part reacts to the situation naturally without wrath or rancour and goes most gladly through the fire-ordeal. Fire God appearing as a Brahmin is said to have handed Sita to Rama as beautiful as Lakshmi. The whole assembly of monkeys and demons were highly pleased.

Posterity of non-heroic age, of an age when evidently the moral graces of culture had developed, very properly jettisoned the awkward cargo of a pioneering and rather crude heroic age and presented Rama, the God, in a juster situation!

After sometime of peaceful rule of Rama, when Sita was pregnant, news came to Rama that some of the citizens of Ayodhya still were not reconciled to his having accepted Sita who had been abducted by Ravana and kept for a year in his house. Only a little before he got this news—and that brings out the poignancy of the almost tragic story of Rama's life, epitomizing the Hindu social theory and philosophy that this life is by and large a trial of human patience and capacity for silent suffering through which man purifies himself and fits

himself for final salvation—he had endearingly consulted Sita about her special desires which generally pregnant women, particularly on the first occasion, feel. Fortunately for Rama, Sita, a pious and noble soul she was, had desired to visit those forests and other places which in their exile they had trod on the banks of the Ganga.[44]

Rama decided to send Sita ostensibly to satisfy her desire but in reality to abandon her, to the further bank of the Ganga and commissioned his ever obedient and unquestioning strong brother Lakshmana. While giving him the mission he confided in him the reason, viz. the state-reason of an ideal monarch being above any reproach from his subjects. Lakshmana with a heavy heart, silent mouth and sad face deposited Sita on the southern bank of the Ganga and then he could not contain himself. Cursing himself and falling at her feet he begged her pardon and though he was forbidden by Rama to inform Sita about the reason, at her command blurted out the real reason. Sita's reaction was placid and typically age-old one of Hindu woman, after she recovered from the first shock. She blamed her fate and said: "Surely I was born only to suffer, Oh Lakshmana; and here I am grief incarnate. I do not know what sin I committed formerly or whom I separated from his wife that I should be so abandoned by my husband, though my conduct is pure..... I should certainly have killed myself in this situation if I had not the responsibility of bearing the progeny of my husband to continue his race.. ..... It is for the sake of prestige of the family that Raghava has abandoned me. Well, the king has his duties and tell him on my behalf that he may discharge all of them well; for that is his highest Dharma.... Husband is a wife's God; and I must do whatever pleases him even at the cost of my life. Carry this message to Rama." With all this brave and pleasant talk about wifely conduct and royal duty she is inwardly not satisfied that all was well and that she would have a completely just deal. She asks Lakshmana to look at her well and note that she is pregnant. This is from Sita, who the day before she was packed off to the southern bank of the Ganga was endearingly asked by her husband Rama what pregnancy desires she felt which he would gladly fulfil! The reader is finally assured that all this development and further tragedies

in Rama's life were the consequence of the curse which was laid on Vishnu.[45]

Kalidasa, who upheld the ideal of Hindu womanhood, however, was not at all satisfied that the second repudiation of Sita by Rama even though the latter had a convincing proof of her extreme purity was an occasion on which a self-respecting wife should bear the punishment without a protest at least, however mild it be. He has delivered her message to Rama in seven beautiful and well-knit verses.[46] He has put at the very beginning the part most important for and characteristic of a self-respecting woman, making it the spear-head of first reaction. In its gentle sarcasm it is a telling reproach based almost on the same ground on which Rama took the decision to abandon Sita. Says Sita: "Ask that king on my behalf, whether it befits his learning or his family tradition that he should abandon me, on hearing people's scandalous talk about me, who, in his own presence, had come out pure and unscathed from fire?" In what follows Kalidasa puts more or less the same matter as in the *Ramayana* but in better language and adds: "As you are the king, though I am thus abandoned, you should treat me as one of the anchorites residing in your kingdom." Later, Kalidasa[47] gives clear indication that he himself was of the view that Rama's action was cruel. For he tells us that Valmiki when he found Sita in that condition expressed his wrath against Rama informing Sita that he was cross with the great Rama for her abandonment in excitement of scandalous talk.

Bhavabhuti has avoided the scene as his interest is fixed on the later events of Rama's life and his dramatic technique permits him to use devices to suggest that the abandonment of Sita had taken place. It is likely, too, that he had appraised the situation to be most excruciating for Rama. May it be that he was more in sympathy with Rama, himself the orthodox Brahmin that he was, prepared to set aside the opinions and ideas of his contemporaries, than with Sita and her plight? Anyway he has described in a masterly analysis the tragic occasion as felt by Rama, whom on state business he makes leave Sita sleeping by herself before she was to start on her journey of exile. She was told that in accordance with her wishes she would proceed to the desired forests early in the

morning. Rama with Sita sleeping on his lap or near him is shown engaged in a grand soliloquy.[48] The whole of it is a condemnation of himself by Rama, in part explaining how the inhuman action was dictated by the inexorable law of monarch's duties, culminating towards its end in an action which demonstrates most eloquently Rama's appraisal of himself as most unworthy of the great and pure Sita. The action which clenches this issue home is his placing Sita's feet on his head and declaring that pleasurable contact of Sita to be his last! A Hindu husband anytime, even once, touching his wife's feet with his head is ordinarily an impossibility. A Hindu wife tolerating such action on the part of her husband is almost a monstrosity. It is anathema to the standard pattern of behaviour subsisting between a husband and a wife, wherein it is the latter that bows down to the former and not *vice a versa*. Such utter abandon in supplication, such feeling of misery and unworthiness experienced and expressed by Rama, Bhavabhuti thought should be a sufficient punishment for, if not exoneration of his cruel action in discharge of his kingly duties. And it is as a king that Rama orders Lakshmana to take Sita silently to her exile!

Tulasidasa felt that more than the ordinary call of royal duty was necessary to justify the action; and naturally, in view of his times, with advancing faith in Rama's Supreme Godhood and in Divine predetermination of mundane and human events he turned to Rama's Divine mission appointed for Him. But even he felt that in view of the Fire-ordeal successfully gone through by Sita, Rama must have some intenser shock than the scandalous rumour of a citizen to make him take the kind of cruel decision he took. He has made Rama dream the whole scene of the scandalous talk. On Rama's awaking he was reminded of the long ages he had yet to live in Ayodhya. These circumstances led him to resolve that he should abandon Sita. Instead of Sita's desire coming first and Rama's decision to use its fulfilment as the fit occasion for the execution of his later resolve to cast her away following it as in other accounts, in Tulasidasa's description Rama's resolve to abandon comes first and consultation with Sita about her pregnancy-desires afterwards.[49]

Rama represented to his brothers that his resolve to

abandon Sita was not only his royal command but also the 'wish of Hari', the sanction of the Supreme God. Yet Bharata as Tulasidasa tells us, made bold to put in a word for Sita. This prompted Rama to inform Bharata of the scandalous talk about Sita; but Bharata was not silenced. Ultimately Rama threatened his brothers that he would not live if they did not listen to him and carry out his order. They would then have to rue for their non-compliance. This talk settled the matter and Lakshmana led away Sita to her abandonment.

As Tulasidasa describes the incident, Sita is taken to a place where she could not see any hermitages as she had expected in fulfilment of her desire. Finding the place a man-forsaken beast-infested region she was so terrified that Lakshmana seeing her condition and knowing his mission almost fainted in grief. In the meanwhile some divine intervention assured him that he should leave Sita and go and that everything would be alright. Again here Tulasidasa is seen turning to divine intervention for straightening out human situations! Tulasidasa therefore is not concerned with appraising the morality nor even the cruelty of Rama's action, everything being pre-ordained and divinely settled, rules and problems of mortal, human and limited social life do not matter! So entrenched was the belief that even Valmiki, when brought on the scene to take charge of the lonely Sita, does not mention a word about the wrong and cruel nature of the action but merely assures her of his full protection![50]

The story of Rama as narrated by the composer of the latter half of the *Ramayana* is a tragedy. Rama sees his lovely twin sons, hears his own life story chanted by them in the most appealing tones and tunes on the occasion of the performance of the 'horse-sacrifice.' For the purpose of the rite Rama had intalled a golden image of Sita, as the religious part of it could not be gone through without one's wife by one's side. It is a poignant situation! Rama, as he has been famed throughout later generations, is the typical monogamist in the midst of a society which in ideals and in royal practice was not wedded to monogamy. Rama proved his genuine love for Sita by putting up a golden image of her for the performance of the rite of the great horse-sacrifice. He was freshly reminded of her by the dear sons who were by then 12 years old. They thus

not only reopened Rama's deep wound but rubbed salt into it. And yet as the *Ramayana* has it, Rama sent a queer-looking message to Valmiki. I say queer-looking because it was not meant either to get Valmiki's opinion about Rama's acceptance of Sita or Valmiki's assurance and authority about her purity to dispel the doubts of the citizens but only to throw another challenge. If Valmiki and Sita were both sure of her purity, Sita was to go through an ordeal to clear Rama of the charge that he accepted her back from Ravana's house being enamoured of her. In the message there is not a word about his willingness to accept her back much less his intense desire to do so. The ordeal that Rama proposed Sita should stand was intended to clear the scandal attaching to him for his past acceptance of her![51] It is only when Sita is led to the place of ordeal where not only the citizens but also many of the venerable great sages had gathered together and when Valmiki addressed the whole gathering in the clearest possible terms declaring perfect innocence and purity of Sita that Rama is made to hint his willingness to accept her back if she came out successful in the ordeal.[52] Sita's ordeal-appeal puts the lid on it. She evidently desired to go through the ordeal to clear her husband without the least desire to go back to live with him! Self-respect had finally revolted. She entreated the mother Earth in the name of perfect purity to engulf her alive. Mother Earth opened up Her bowels and took Sita in. So ended Rama's domestic life with Sita's vindication and Rama's clearance. Kalidasa's version follows the *Ramayana* account more or less closely. But instead of Rama sending his queer-looking message, Kalidasa represents him more properly as offering his kingdom to Valmiki as gift for the grand piece of literature composed by him. Valmiki declines the gift and seeks in return Rama's acceptance of Sita. Rama politely but firmly tells Valmiki that as the citizens had cast a doubt on Sita's purity of character, he can gladly accept her back at his command only if she satisfies the citizens about herself through an ordeal in public. Valmiki accepts the stipulation on behalf of Sita. Preparations for an ordeal having been made Sita clad in an ochre-coloured garment comes forward and having sipped sacred water offered by one of Valmiki's disciples makes a solemn declaration of her innocence and purity and abjures

the mother Earth to take her in her bowels if her declaration is true. Immediately rises up from the earth a throne borne on the head of a cobra with mother Earth incarnate seated on it. She takes up Sita on her lap and while Rama keeps on crying out to Her not to take Sita away She, Sita and the throne disappear within the bowels of the earth! In the end, Rama was not only struck with grief but was enraged and was about to shoot his arrow at the Earth when Brahma pacified him![53]

Bhavabhuti changed the last episode so as to intensify Rama's piognancy at his having discarded Sita and to strengthen his yearning for her. I have already referred to the brave deeds of the twin sons so effectively used by Bhavabhuti for his dramatic purpose and later incorporated by Tulasidasa in his poem, which have continued to enrapture Hindu audience in thousands over many generations. Further technique to excite pity and remorse and foster eagerness used by Bhavabhuti ends with a scene where the divine lady Arundhati on behalf of herself and on assurances from mother Earth and from Ganga, the family-goddess of the family of Raghu, announces Sita's complete innocence, and perfect purity and enjoins Rama to substitute Sita for the golden image of hers which he had got ready for the religious ceremonies of the horse-sacrifice. Rama accepts Sita.[54] The drama ends and the tragedy is turned into pleasant union!

Tulasidasa utilizes the changes about the horse-sacrifice, the deeds of the twin sons and elaborates the latter so as to enable the boys to defeat even Rama. And it is on the battle-field round the sacrificial horse near the hermitage of the sage that Valmiki goes with the boys to see what has happened. There on seeing Rama lying in his chariot Valmiki runs and touches his feet; Rama gets up in haste. Valmiki explains to him everything about the twin sons whereupon Rama embraces them. Further Rama on his own asks Lakshmana to go to Sita and ask her to undergo an ordeal. And Tulasidasa uses the easy technique of divine guidance and inspiration to make Sita willing to do so without demur for she had also thought of doing so. The rest follows as in Kalidasa's version. Sita's dramatic departure puts Rama in mind of his departure to his capital taking his sons with him.[55] Rama had to live without Sita till the end of his mundane existence!

12

TWO REGIONAL DEITIES: VITHOBA AND DATTA

All the Gods whose nature and history have been explored so far as well as the Deities who will be studied in the next two chapters are known and receive worship in some measure in every region of India. The main difference lies in the varying intensity and extent but not in almost exclusive regional limitation. But Datta and particularly Vithoba are Deities that have temples dedicated to them very largely and receive intensive worship almost wholly in Maharashtra.

Datta appears to be a Deity of extra-Maharashtrian spread if not origin because of His early connection with the sect of Naths or of the later Kanphata Jogis.[1] There are temples to Datta in some of the sub-Himalayan regions[2] but their local genesis is not beyond doubt. Further, Datta has been adopted as a kind of patron Deity among some ascetic sects, in whose monasteries a printed picture of the Deity is seen hanging in some place and receiving worship. There are also the foot-prints on a lone peak of Mt. Girnar near Junagad which are known as Dattatreya, simply, because they are believed to be those of Datta.

In Maharashtra the bright fifteenth of the lunar month Margasirsha is observed as the 'Jayanti' or birth-day of the Deity and it is duly celebrated in the evening in temples dedicated to Datta. The day is shown as Dattajayanti in the almanacs of Marathi-speaking region. It also figures under that caption in the Gujarati almanac issued in Bombay but its observance in Gujarat is not attested. It is listed in a very curious way in the Panjabi almanac as 'Dattatreyotpatti', the production or the outcoming of Dattatreya. In the same almanac the famous 'Jayanti' of Krishna and the not-so-well-known "jayantis" of Matsya and Parasurama are properly noted, the former as Krishnashtami and the latter as 'jayantis.' It is clear that Datta-birth is not an event intimately known

through its celebration but only an elite matter of noting. The day does not receive even that or any other kind of mention in the Kannada, Telugu, Tamil and Malyalam almanacs.

There are recorded at least two temples to Datta at Hubli[3] in the Kannada-speaking region but then Hubli is near the Marathi border and some spread in the border areas cannot militate against the generalisation that Datta-worship is almost a Maharashtrian phenomenon. And Sripada Srivallabha, whose life occupies the early sections of the famous book of Datta-cult *Gurucharitra,* which is in Marathi, and who is believed by the sectarians to have been an incarnation of Datta and the spiritual preceptor of the inspirer of the famous book and the *de facto* Deity of the sect, Narasimha Sarasvati, was a resident of Pithapuram in Andhradesa.

Dattatraya figures among the incarnations of Vishnu in the lists which enumerate twenty-two of such; but no iconological text, as Gopinath Rao's and G. H. Khare's collections of these show, contains practical instructions for working out an image of the Deity. Gopinath Rao contended that some of the early mediaeval sculptures from North India and the one at Badami in Kannada-region are representations of Dattatraya. Khare[4] has rightly cast doubts on this identification particularly of the former ones. That at Badami is a single-headed image sitting in the pose of 'yogic' trance. The only indication of its being a representation of Datta is the presence of the mounts of the three Gods, Brahma, Vishnu, Siva, viz. swan, eagle and bull. Mythology makes Datta a composite Deity combining the three Supreme Gods.

Farther South, at Tiruchendur near Srivaikuntam in Tinnevelly district Ayyar[5] assures us that there is an image of Dattatraya in a cave but unfortunately he has not given any description of the image. Srinivasan's complete silence regarding any shrine of this Deity in the South leads me to ignore Ayyar's non-specific statement.

Gopinath Rao[6] stated that there was another way which according to him "is evidently a modern way" of representing Datta; and that is "as a human being with three heads and four [six] arms, attended by four dogs of different colours, said to represent the four Vedas, and also by a bull."

In Maharashtra the earliest historically known mention

of Datta represents Him as a single-headed Deity.[7] This representation is the one sponsored by the Manabhava sect in Maharashtra. The sect appears to have originated in Maharashtra and at the beginning looked upon both Krishna and Datta as their patron Deities. But during the progress of the sect between the middle of the 13th and the beginning of the 15th century the leaders of the movement lavished their poetic literary skill on either Krishna's life events or on the fond deification of their own promulgators. Only two of the lesser writers devoted some of their work to Datta. For practical purposes we may take it that the spread of Datta cult in Maharashtra owes nothing or next to nothing to the Manabhava sect.

Can the stray occurrence of Datta worship in the North be the consequence of the proselytizing activities of the Manabhava sect, for it is one of the very few Maharashtrian ideas and things which Maharashtra has succeeded in exporting to other parts of India? It came as a pleasant surprise to Dr. L. N. Chapekar[8] and later to me when he came across at Sangvi Haveli, a village of about 1300 souls in 1954, and only about seven miles to the west of Poona city, about 13 families of Manabhava sectarians and about 25 Manabhava ascetics, and among the latter a good number of Panjabis who have settled there for the last fifty years with a monastery affiliated to the chief centre of the sect on this side, viz. the monastery at Phaltan. And what is equally significant from our viewpoint is that the monastery at Sangvi Haveli is known for its efficacy as a spirit-exorcising centre. Quite a number of people who are "possessed"—more often they are women as anyone having intimate knowledge of Maharashtrian society should be able to tell, and their number in the total may not have decreased during the last four centuries of the exorcist efficiency of Datta—they are asked to attend the daily prayer and worship at the monastery and are promised relief by that performance. It is reported, too, that patients do get better and leave for their homes!

But the probability of influence of the Manabhava sect in spreading Datta-worship, though sporadically, in the North is very much diminished by the fact that Datta is more directly connected with another sect, which is definitely older and

which quite clearly originated in the North. And certainly one, viz. Goraksha, and probably another his senior contemporary Matsyendra, were far greater and more dynamic personalities than even the great Chakradhara of the Manabhavas. Goraksha with his organizing work and his scientific literary contribution on the Yoga system is one of the greatest of Indians. It is small wonder that before the 13th century he got apotheosized and enshrined in a temple to Himself as already stated, within the Saiva complex of the pentad. The stray North Indian attention to Datta might therefore have resulted through the wide spread of the Natha sect, as the sect of the Yogic school of Datta, Matsyendra and Gorakha is called.

The Natha sect which under the inspiration of Matsyendra and Goraksha or Gorakha perfected the system of Yogic technique known as 'hata yoga' is *par evcellence* the mystic school of religious pursuasion and has depended for its spread on the attainment of miracle-working powers, 'siddhis', by its great promulgators and later pontiffs. That Yogic exercises conferred certain extraordinary powers on the adept practitioner has been a very old belief which though not attested in the oldest *Upanishads* like the *Chhandogya* is certainly clearly asserted in the latest of the older *Upanishads*, the *Svetasvatara*.[9] It appears to me that one of the great services that Krishna-Vasudeva rendered to the cause of religion and philosophy in India was to tone down the extravagant pursuit of Yoga for the sake of achieving the supposed powers and to utilize Yogic technique as an aid to concentration enabling better meditation and strengthenng usual morality.

But it is very clear from later history, even though we may discount some of the claims made on behalf of Sri Sankaracharya by his biographers, that there had not only continued the practice of the exaggerated system of Yoga but also it had developed more unhealthy ramifications, hotly pursued by imposters. Sankaracharya himself is represented as having resorted to the use of his expert mastery of this technique to bear down opposition and to convince his contemporaries of the truth of his teachings. Sankaracharya himself was one of what are called the 'siddhas', perfect beings.

Exactly when and how the concept of 'siddhas' arose we do

not know as yet. But we know[10] "that the creed of 84 siddhas had become quite influential from the eleventh-twelfth century A.D.," and that "the avadhutas [one who has renounced] are mentioned in the *Bhagavata*." The belief in the creed was so strong even in the 12th century that Kalhana,[11] the Kashmirian writing his history of Kashmir in the middle of that century, projected its currency back into the 9th century. He tells us that during the reign of Avantivarman about the middle of the 9th century a number of 'siddhas' were born in Kashmir for the good of the people. Bhatta Kallata the litterateur was one such and Suyya the engineer was another. Goraksha's whirlwind compaign must have further strengthened the faith of the people in the creed of Siddhas.

In Maharashtra the Nathas must have reached at least by the beginning of the 12th century and perhaps acted as the proximate cause of the philosophizing through the medium of Marathi. Anyway Mukundaraja, the first Marathi saint-poet-philosopher who completed his work in A.D. 1188, mentions that his immediate preceptor was the third Natha in spiritual succession. A century later, Jnanesvara,[12] too, mentions his Natha-affiliation. But he traces the spiritual succession evidently in a shortened form. For he mentions Siva as the originator or the first preceptor and brings down the succession immediately through Minanatha or Matsyendranatha, Goraksha and Gahininatha to his own elder brother Nivrittinatha. Ramadasa[13] in the 17th century without attempting to give any spiritual succession tells his readers that Datta, Goraksha and other Siddhas have always lived on alms which they got by begging. This is perhaps the earliest use of the term Siddha in relation to Datta in Marathi language.

I have stated above that the spread of Datta-cult in Maharashtra is not the work of the Manabhava sect. And that is an assertion which stands substantiated by the circumstance that Datta of the Maharashtrians as known in the images in His temples or from the literature in His praise and service is the three-faced, six-armed image and not the single-faced one which was (and is ?) contemplated upon by the Manabhava sectarians.

The man who pushed forward the Datta-cult was one

Nrisimha Sarasvati, who is the principal hero of the much-worshipped Marathi book *Gurucharitra,* 'life of the preceptor.' He is believed to have died in A.D. 1458. Thus he is the first among Indian sect-founders of the 15th century of sects to which the one feature of complete and even abject surrender of the disciple or devotee to the preceptor has been common as in the 'Pushtimarga' of Vallabhacharya. The main differences between the Vallabha-founded sect and the Chaitanyite school on the one hand and the Maharashtrian sect promulgated by Nrisimha Sarasvati on the other are: (1) the different Deities, that of the former two being Krishna with His lady-love Radha and that of the latter Datta, variously credited with Yoga preaching or monistic philosophy, but always as an ascetic, unmindful of worldly ties and even usual morality; and (2) the pontiffs of the former sects can be and are married men, whereas those of the latter have been ascetics. Nrisimha was ordained as a Sarasvati ascetic in Varanasi (Banaras) by one Krishna Sarasvati. And Nrisimha's disciple, the author of *Gurucharitra,* Gangadhara Sarasvati, having been admitted into the order by Nrisimha was also an ascetic of the Sarasvati order.

The various miracles described in the "sacred book" of the sect played upon the minds of Maharashtrians who must have been on the point of succumbing utterly to despair under the persecution and torture of a century and a half of Muslim rule. And some concessions that seem to have been won by Nrisimha Sarasvati from one or the other of the Bahamani rulers helped to confirm peoples' faith in them. Credulity can hardly go further than it has done in the case of *Gurucharitra!*

However, three-quarters of a century passed before another preceptor of the sect known to posterity appeared on the scene! Gangadhara Sarasvati the author of the "sacred book" of the sect and the architect of the initial success of it is believed to have died not very long after his preceptor, the principal hero of his *Gurucharitra;* the next man we know of from the available sources who followed the sectarian school was one Janardanaswami[14] who was the spiritual preceptor of the far more famous and the great saint-poet-philosopher-humanist Ekanatha who is said to have been born about A.D. 1533 and who died in A.D. 1599. Janardana spent the best

part of his life, 1504-1575, in serving under the Muslim officer of the fort of Devgad and is known to have written a panegyric on Datta. Though Ekanatha was his disciple, the pupillary status did not evidently carry with it all that is generally implied in sectarian discipleship. Ekanatha lavished his emotional energy and literary skill on Vishnu, Krishna and Rama and the philosophy of the *Bhagavatapurana* than on any other Deity or cult. His contribution to the cause of Datta-cult is confined to some writing on the birth of Datta. He it was, on the other hand, who organized and strengthened the school of Jnanesvara. And among the great sect of 'varkaris' or the devotees of Vithoba, the Deity competing for Maha-rashtrian acceptance at about, or since a little before, the time Datta was introduced, Ekanatha is placed in the middle of the great triad of Jnanesvara, Ekanatha and Tukarama. No doubt Ekanatha is the first Maharashtrian and among non-Datta sectarians perhaps the only one who has devoted an invocation to Datta. Ekanatha's invocation, however, is made to Datta quite explicitly because He traditionally figures as the preceptor, 'guru' of his preceptor,[15] i.e. because Datta was a grand 'guru' of Ekanatha.

One Dasopanta Deshpande, A.D. 1551-1615, a junior of Ekanatha, is the only person known to have written a number of works on Datta. How far they were popular I am not in a position to say. Nor can I say anything about their intrinsic value as none of them has been available to me.

We know from Ramadasa's *Dasabodha*[16] that by this time, i.e. within about a generation of Dasopanta's death, the Dtta-chant school figured among the schools of name-chant for salvation current in Maharashtra, those mentioned specifically being Datta-name-chant, Rama-name-chant and Vitthal-name-chant, Siva-name-chant, Krishna-name-chant, Hari-name-chant, Tukai-name-chant, etc.

The progress of the cult and worship of Datta can be gauged from the fact that in Poona at the beginning of the 19th century there was only one shrine of Datta and that too, as we have seen, in the house of a gentleman. The most famous temple of Datta is the one at Vadi-Narasimha, a suburb of Shirol in Kolhapur district, but nothing is known about the date when it was erected. It is well known as an exorcising

centre and is resorted to by a large number of persons "possessed" by spirits. As a matter of fact in Maharashtra, Datta, to whom because of His being a 'guru' Thursday is sacred, is the most potent Deity for driving out spirits. In contemporary Poona Datta with 11 temples is firmly established. In Pandharpur, the religious centre of Maharashtra, Datta has three out of about 54 temples, dedicated to him. The age of the temples is not known but at least one of them must be fairly recent, the image of Datta in that temple having been executed at Pandharpur itself in A.D. 1808.[17]

In Haveli taluka at the centre of which stands Poona city, as pointed out earlier, out of the 120 villages reporting on temples only 9 villages have each one Datta temple. In Poona district as a whole Datta appears to have made very little progress. The new edition of the *Gazetteer* (1954) mentions only one Datta temple among the 43 listed for mention in about 30 places; and that was erected only in the 20th century.[18] In Kolaba district there is a well-known temple of Datta on a hill near Cheul, a flourishing town in mediaeval times. But even that temple is not older than A.D. 1848. The annual birth-day festival of Datta, already mentioned, is the occasion of a great fair at Cheul. In the early eighties of the last century when the *District Gazetteer of Kolaba*[19] was compiled there used to gather between 8000 to 10000 pilgrims at the place on that day. The existence of such a Datta centre should explain the comparative popularity of Datta as Deity in household worship in the village of Nagav already noted. But even such fame and popularity with the rural people of nearby Cheul had not influenced the towns-people of Alibag, the district centre, to have a Datta temple that could go into the list of principal temples of the town. The chief temples of Alibag then listed are those of Mahadeva, Vishnu, Vithoba, Maruti and Rama.[20]

The other god who is the subject-matter of this chapter is Vithoba. And He is even more Maharashtrian than Datta in many ways. He is clearly some form of Vishnu, and has been so for all the six or seven centuries through which He has been current in Maharashtra. He seems to have been in worship in some Kannada areas as Vitthal before His installation at Pandharpur as either Vitthal, Vithoba or Panduranga, in all probability before the 13th century A.D.[21] From the 14th

century onwards, when Namadev in his pilgrimage must have carried the name of Pandharpur as the centre of his favourite Deity Vithoba, Pandharpur has remained the religious centre of Maharashtra. Nasik, another sacred town in Maharashtra, though hallowed by its legendary association with Rama and Sita and though is the centre of a periodic pilgrimage of all-India status, does not evoke the same feelings, nor receive anything like the same number of Maharashtrian pilgrims year by year.

Confirmed and exclusive devotees of Vithoba have been for over three centuries at least, organized into what may be, for the sake of convenience and strictness in terminology, called a sect known as 'Varkari', 'one who performs a pilgrimage.' Though these devotees may be called a sect it should be borne in mind that the usual narrowness of religious attitude associated with sectarian organizations does not characterize them. From before A.D. 1630, these devotees have been taking out palanquin processions from Alandi, a place lying about 12 miles north of Poona city and sanctified by Jnanesvara's funeral monument, from Dehu, hallowed as the native place of the greatest devotee of Vithoba, Tukarama or Tukoba as he is endearingly called in Maharashtra, and also from other places to the accompaniment of highly devotional attitude and equally stirring music to Pandharpur and back on the two 11ths, one in the bright half of the lunar month of Ashadha and the other in that of Kartik.[22]

The two days of Ashadha and Kartik are known in Maharashtra as Ashadhi-Kartiki fair, which is noted as such even in the Gujarati almanac issued in Bombay. Besides Pandharpur, both Alandi and Dehu have a fair on the bright 11th of Kartik. The nature of the appeal to the people can be gauged from the fact that the statistics of pilgrims visiting Pandharpur in a year in the nine years 1876-1884 gives an average of 165774 and the actual number in the year 1884 as 209897.[23] The revised edition[24] of *Poona District Gazetteer* gives the number of people at the Alandi fair as 80000 and at the Dehu fair as 21000. Besides the Kartiki-fair, Dehu holds a fair on the death-anniversary of Tukarama on the dark 2nd of the lunar month of Phalgun which was attended by 50000 people.

Vithoba in that name is not mentioned in any puranic or

iconological text and has therefore neither standard characteristics in representation; nor are there any instructions given about His image. There is a good deal of discussion and doubt even regarding the nature of the earliest image in His famous temple at Pandharpur. I shall not go into these details of iconography but shall refer later to the aspects in which Vithoba was viewed, contemplated upon and put before the pious public by the two greatest of His devotees, Namadev and Tukarama.

Before doing this, however, it is desirable to describe the current practice regarding Vithoba-image and the spread of Vithoba-cult. G. H. Khare has minutely described the image in the famous Pandharpur temple and also the shrines within and without the precincts and all the temples near and in the town of Pandharpur. Vithoba's special attitude marks Him out from the rest of the Gods of Hindu pantheon. He stands akimbo with the palms of His two hands resting on the two sides of the waist in an attitude of anxious waiting. In the principal shrine of the Deity, Vithoba stands alone. In a full-fledged temple behind the principal Vithoba-shrine facing east stands the image of Rukmini, the consort of Vithoba, whose constant association with Him is so much acknowledged by the people of Maharashtra that usually a temple consecrated to this Deity is known as the Vithoba-Rukmini temple.[25] In most temples one finds the two images standing side by side, Rukmini being to the left of Vithoba. At Pandharpur Rukmini is represented as seated on a throne in a separate full-fledged temple of Her own from the side of the central hall of which a door opens on the road leading to the shrines of the two other consorts of Vithoba, Satyabhama and Rahi. Leaving out all other shrines and even other particulars about the main shrine and the shrines of Rukmini, Satyabhama and Rahi, it may be noted that the additions and modifications to the shrines and images had gone on for at least two and a half centuries, from A.D. 1618 to A.D. 1878.[26]

The most significant feature of the local practice of annual and ceremonial worship is, from the point of view of the sociology of religion adumbrated here, the fact that for the processions of the Deities at the Ashadhi-Kartiki fairs the idols used are those of Vitthal or Vithoba, Radha and Rukmini and that

they are of gold and are the private possession of a local gentleman who has them for his daily worship!

The date of the construction of the Pandharpur temple is not yet determined and perhaps is not determinable. The Vithoba temple at Kolhapur is believed to be almost as old as the well-known temple of Mahalakshmi or Ambabai. The latter must have been built before A.D. 1218 which is the date of the earliest inscription in the temple.[27] The idols of Vithoba and Rakhumai, as Rukmini is more often called in the language of the pious devotees, in the temple at Dehu, the native place of Tukarama, are believed to have been discovered in a field about the 12th century A.D. In Poona city there is only one Vithoba temple which has secured a place in the list of specially-noted temples given in the new edition of the *Gazetteer*. In the district among the 43 or so shrines named there is no other Vithoba temple.[28] Vithoba cult has made much more progress than is suggested by this list. In the beginning of the 19th century Poona city, as already stated, had only 6 temples of Vithoba though there were many more idols of the Deity. In 1956, in the list of places of worship in Poona Vithoba claims 54 temples. As an indication of the position of Vithoba-worship in rural Deccan I should draw my readers' attention to the figures of Vithoba temples in existence in the villages of Haveli taluka which are given in an earlier chapter. They show that Vithoba with 60 shrines in 55 villages of the 120 which supplied any data regarding temples is far ahead of any of the other newer Deities like Rama, Datta or Ganapati. To judge by the practices of the people of Nagav, a village near Alibag, in which town a Vithoba-temple is one of the principal five shrines, Vithoba is fairly represented among the Deities of household worship but mostly in a non-Brahmin caste.

The first well-known devotee of Vithoba of Pandharpur is Namadev who died in A.D. 1350. He was a great traveller who had lived in North India for sometime. In the collection of his verses the description of some at least of the doings of Krishna in the cowherd-settlement of Vrindavan in endearing terms are put before any of his appeals to or praises of Vithoba and his own musings, ethical or philosophical. It is clear from his addresses to his favourite Deity that he conceived of Him

as one with three consorts whom he sometimes calls "mothers." They are Rahi, Rakhamai and Satyabhama. Speaking of the idols of worship he tells us that Changdeva, one of the great contemporaries of Jnanesvara, whom the latter is believed to have led to the Vaishnava philosophy of humility and devotion, worshipped Panduranga i.e. Vithoba and Rahi, Rakhumai. However mentioning his own worship of his favourite Deity he says that he circumambulated Vitthal and Rakhumai.[29] I conclude from Namadev's manner of reference to his favourite Deity that Namadev who must have tasted the fervour of Radha-Krishna worship at Vrindavan had sufficiently imbibed the doctrine of Radha's participation in Krishna-complex. Rukmini, however, the favourite consort, who had impressed the Indian people by her passionate love interpreted spiritually in the newer context had captured the hearts of the people of Vidarbha and Maharashtra. Rukmini was a princess of Vidarbha. Krishna as conceived by the early Manabhavas of Vidarbha was the husband of Rukmini, whose self-choice-marriage a number of Manabhava and other Maharashtrian poets sung in poetry over a period of some centuries. The idols that were earliest in worship would in all probability have been of Vithoba and Rukmini. Lady-love Radha of North India was changed into Raha and a consort. Raha was transformed into Rahi to rhyme with Rukmabayi, Rakhumai or Rakhumabai; or Rahi was directly derived from Radhika.

Namadev's imbibing of cowherd-Krishna fervour is attested further by the practice of what is called 'kala', in more usual terms 'dahihandi', at Pandharpur twice in the year besides the function on the dark 9th of the lunar month of Sravana, i.e. the next morning of the Krishna-birth celebration. On the 1st day of the dark half of Ashadha and on the dark 2nd of Kartik there is 'kala' with curds kept in an earthen-pot to be broken for the curds in it and it is called 'Namadevkala'.[30]

Ekanatha's composition, and his rendering of *Bhagavata-purana* show his predilection towards Krishnaism. Some of the chants that he composed in description of the deeds of young or boy Krishna and his career at Vrindavana have ever since been sweetly song in Maharashtra not only by pious men and

women, not only by indifferent persons of musical bent but also by some of the classical masters of music. They are significantly known as 'gavalanis', melodies of cowherdesses.

Tukarama shows in his poetry the influence of Krishna panegyrics and practices more or less current for about three centuries by then. He devoted more than two hundred of his 'abhangs', verses, to describing almost all the deeds of child, boy, youthful Krishna, including the incident of stripping the cowherdesses naked while bathing in the river. He refers to his sixteen thousand wives in more than one place. He too was impressed by these deeds. He too accepted Rahi as a consort. For at least once in his *Gatha*,—I am not sure that there are not other references in the four thousand and odd verses—he mentions her along with Rakhamai as fanning Vithoba who is sitting with Tukarama himself as an attendant holding the sandals for the God. He is not always able to forget his four-armed Krishna-Vishnu even when he speaks of the God whom Pundalika worshipped. And he even imagines the Vrishni scions Uddhava and Akrura standing by the side of his favourite Deity Vithoba with Rakhumadevi. Tukarama even goes further and identifies the God of Pandharpur as a four-armed Deity with sixteen thousand wives and makes the legendary Pundalik the 'patil' of the place.[31] But in his less emotional and more matter-of-fact compositions he makes it clear that the Deity of the Pandharpur temple and also of that at Dehu is Vithoba with Rakhumai standing on his left and speaks of Rakhumai not only as the wife of Vithoba but the "mother" and the interceder on behalf of Vithoba's devotees.[32]

It speaks well for the conscience of Maharashtra that in spite of the singing of the praises of Rahi as a consort of Vithoba by the most appealing of the saints and preachers for three centuries, who in their inspired moments could keep Vithoba distinct from Krishna and Radha, its people did not accept Radha or Rahi as the consort in worship of Vithoba. They have continued to build temples to Vithoba and Rukmini. The school of Vithoba-worship is a cult for religious ecstasy, exhorting its followers to temper their daily conduct of life with morality and humanism.

In one important respect the greatest exponent of the doctrines and practices of the school, Tukarama proclaimed a

modification of standard Hinduism which may well be considered an attempt to transcend it. In one famous verse[33] of his he declares that he desires neither wealth nor even salvation but wants to have the company of the saints and that for that end he would gladly agree to be reborn. To ask for rebirth is a sentiment that goes against the tenet of transmigration and the ideal of cessation of that inexhorable process. This is a more positive attitude to life than the one that craves for cessation of mundane rebirth. And once Tukarama chanted it, the verse has become a current coin. It is recited in chorus at the end of not only formal preaching but also of some religious rites with distress-chants at the end.

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HANUMAN, THE MONKEY-GOD: A VEDIC THERIOMORPHIC CONTINUITY

The monkey-god Hanuman, Maruti or Anjaneya as he is variously called is not a member of the pentad of the Hindu complex of worship. Though he is a venerable and much-liked and appealed to deity of the pantheon of popular Hinduism, he has not received attention from the writers of iconological literature. In G. H. Khare's[1] detailed analysis of this tliterature icon by icon, the monkey-god is mentioned in only one source, rather late, and that too as a member of the 'Rama-panchayatana', 'Rama-pentad', the group of Rama and his family. There two alternative positions in the composite group and two poses are mentioned as the proper ones for him. Of these the one which represents Hanuman as the expounder of some doctrines, though not unsupported by later mythology, does not appear to have been anywhere actually assigned to him. The standard pose and position is the one which places Hanuman or Maruti a little to the front on the right side of Rama.[2] As Gopinath Rao writes: "Hanuman, the faithful monkey-messenger, should be shown as standing a little in front and also to the right of Rama, and should be only so high as to reach the chest, the navel or the hip of Rama." It is clear from the injunction about the height of Hanuman's image in the Rama-group that his subordinate and attendant position is very much stressed. Other directions about the pose of his hands, his tail—and it is because this simian feature of Maruti is retained in all his forms for worship that I have called him theriomorphic and not therianthropic like man-lion incarnation of Vishnu—and his facial expression only emphasize his servant-status.

In Gopinath Rao's words "the look and posture should be such as to evoke compassion and to bring into prominence the ever-ready willingness of this faithful messenger to carry out

the orders of his master." He is therefore shown standing attention with his hands folded in obeisance and his tail respectfully hanging down loose at the back.

Hanuman, like Nandi in Siva temples, is placed in Vishnu temples in South India in the courtyard, so that as Vishnu's attendant or as Rama's transport he receives worship first before the Deity in the shrine.[3] As B. L. Mankad informs me Hanuman along with Ganesa is found in Siva temples in Saurashtra placed in niches outside or in the outer walls in the position of doorkeepers.

The two great services for which Hanuman has always been liked, respected and also venerated are: first, his flight to Lanka and bringing full information about Sita to Rama and His helpers; second, his lifting up a portion of a distant mountain on which alone was to be found a particularly efficacious herb and bringing it on his hand to the battlefield in Lanka where Lakshmana was lying unconscious. The former feat was achieved by Hanuman in a sudden access of prowess as the occasion called for special effort. It was then that he realized his prowess and thenceforward he developed into the most dependable factotum known to mythology or tradition. On the occasion of Lakshmana's swoon, but for his stupendous endeavour Lakshmana would not have survived and then Rama's life would have been a different story. Both these incidents are sufficiently stressed by Valmiki in his *Ramayana*.

These services of Hanuman to Rama, however great, were not thought by Valmiki to deserve special recognition by Rama. For when after His coronation, Rama distributed gifts to various helpers and devotees, in Valmiki's account of the occasion no mention of any gift to Hanuman by Rama is made. On the other hand, readers are told that Rama presented a particularly valuable necklace of pearls to Sita, which, Sita, desiring very much to present it to Hanuman, sought Rama's permission in a genteel manner. Rama having shown his assent, Sita put the necklace round Hanuman's neck.[4]

The space which is given in the text of the *Ramayana* for Hanuman's exploits in Lanka is a testimony to the significance of his feat. The incidents described have ever evoked a joyful, ebullient, almost vociferous applause from generations of Hindus. Hindu posterity in its gratitude to him naturally

raised Hanuman to a kind of godhood. One who accomplishes marvellous deeds and those too in the service of persons revered has not failed to be deified in a way.

That appreciation of Hanuman's services and admiration for his prowess and dutiful conduct had been a-coming writ large in the literature and practice of India will be evident from a brief survey.

Before proceeding further with that story, I should like the reader to bear in mind the circumstance very well noted in Valmiki's *Ramayana* that Hanuman, after his departure from Ayodhya immediately after Rama's coronation and Hanuman's receipt of the costly present without much ado, does not figure again in the further story of Rama's life till the end. No doubt he figures once in the second part of the *Ramayana;* but it is acknowledged that the whole part is a later addition. And his introduction there is made in order to account for the apparent contradiction between the show of his prowess from his crossing over to Lanka and his utter helplessness to succour his chosen chief Sugriva against what is contended to have been a tyrannical and outrageous act of his brother Vali. From this addition to Valmiki's original text of the *Ramayana* we can conclude that Hanuman because of the appreciation of his services, perhaps aided by the existence or recrudescence of some other complex of beliefs, was gaining favour with the folk-element of the body social.

The complex of beliefs, which to me appears to have aided the process of upgrading Hanuman from a mere dutiful attendant, from a factotum who can only be thought of in relation to his chief and master, to that of a powerful deity, who in his own right can do something definite and specific for his devotees, was that about dead heroes. In other words the current belief about 'Viras' as they are called, which has been known to prevail not only in U.P.[5] but also in the Panjab. In the latter region Bir is equivalent to Sidh, which is dialectical and popular for the Samskrit 'Siddha', meaning 'perfect'.[6] It must be borne in mind that the belief about 'perfect' individuals or Siddhas whose powers are unlimited owing to their mastery of Yoga is old and even their standard number of 84 was fixed long ago. V. S. Pathak[7] has attested their incorporation in a Saiva sect as having been as old as the 11th or

the 12th century. Kalhana[8] in the middle of the 12th century tells his readers that Kallata, the famous Saiva commentator and other 'Siddhas' flourished in the reign of the Kashmiri king Avantivarman, who lived about the middle of the 9th century, and achieved great good for the people. And it is well to ask the readers to remember that Hanuman, who is more commonly known as Maruti in Maharashtra and perhaps as Anjaneya in Tamilnad, is called Mahabira in Hindi-speaking areas. Gujarati-speaking people more often speak of him as Hanuman or Hanumanji.

A man-ape deity is known to have received some attention in Vedic religion—'Vrishakapi' being its name in the Rigvedic text. And Pargiter[9] suggested that the name Hanumat appears to be the equivalent of 'Vrishakapi' in Dravidian languages, Hanumat being the corruption or dialectical pronounciation of the Dravidian 'an-mandi'. It is a very plausible suggestion which rather than making Hanumat a Dravidian contribution to the Hindu deity-complex makes him a Vedic deity renamed by Dravidians and in the process partially at least transformed. Even in Panini's time 'Vrishakapi' was believed to have a consort; for Panini[10] derives the word 'Vrishakapayi' the wife of 'Vrishakapi.' But Hanumat is one of the permanently young 'Brahmacharis' or celibates of the Hindu mythology.

We have seen Hanuman's position, his appreciation and the significance attached to him by Valmiki by direct epithets and by the space devoted to the description of his activity. The belief in Hanuman's everlasting presence on earth must have been an old one; for he figures in the great epic *Mahabharata.* He humbles Bhima in an episode which emphasizes the stupendous power of his tail. And what is more significant from our point of view about his rise to a kind of Godhead, is the fact that he is mentioned as perched on the banner-staff of Arjuna's chariot.[11] At the same time the fact should be noted that Lord Krishna while identifying Himself with the best individual or object of a group or class leaves out the monkeys and apes, which He would not have done if Hanuman had attained an important place in the scheme of popular values. This omission of the monkey-world becomes conclusive evidence in favour of my contention when it is seen

that in the very much later Vaishnavite text, the *Bhagavata-purana* (XI, 16, 29) the God identifies Himself with Hanuman among the 'half-men.' The last word is duly translated as 'monkeys' by the great Maharashtrian expounder of the text of the *Purana,* Ekanatha, in the 16th century.

In the intervening period, however, I have not come across any important literary or other evidence indicating the progress of Hanuman in popular appreciation. For Kalidasa in his *Raghuvamsa* only mentions Hanuman, or rather Maruti, in connection with the two incidents, his crossing over to Lanka to trace Sita and his bringing "the extraordinary herbs" which revived Lakshmana.[12] It is remarkable that Hanuman is not mentioned again in the whole description of Rama's later life.

The 7th or the 8th century of the Christian era appears to usher in the era of Hanuman appreciation. The scenes from Rama's life began to receive sculptural representation since about the 6th century A.D. And in the 'Indrasabha' at Verula (Ellora), which is dated in the 8th century, we find Hanuman figuring in them. However, Hanuman's role in Rama's life must have been much more highly valued than such representations would lead us to infer during the centuries that elapsed between the recrudescence of interest in Rama's career as evinced by the sculptures on the Deogadh temple and the two plays of one of the greatest Samskrit dramatic poets, Bhavabhuti, in the 8th century. In Bhavabhuti's plays Hanuman is referred to even by Lakshmana as 'Arya' or 'atrabhavan', the venerable one. The exploits attributed to Hanuman in the later portion of the *Ramayana* had taken a permanent hold on the minds of the folk and the elite and Lakshmana refers to them in a general way. He is impressed by the way Hanuman is referred to by heroes and may be inferred to have looked upon him as the 'vira' of the 'viras', the hero of heroes—this is the earliest application of the term 'vira' to Hanuman, foreshadowing the later Hindi usage of calling him 'Mahabira'. Lakshmana further states, and must be considered to voice the popular opinion of Bhavabhuti's age, that Hanuman combines the prowess of three of the mightiest persons known to mythology, viz. Indra, Vayu and the monkey-king Vali. Hanuman's maternal name, Anjaneya, and his extra-marital origin from Vayu are also mentioned.[13] In his much greater work,

Uttararamacharita, Bhavabhuti has made all the three characters, Lakshmana, Sita and Rama himself give expression to their appreciation of Hanuman. And Rama is made to acknowledge the fact that it was the valour of Hanuman that made his life happy adding to the happiness of the whole world.[14]

From the 8th to the 13th century is a far cry; but the course of Indian history has been such that these centuries are almost silent on many points of sociological interest. The 'Cintra prasasti' of Sarangadeva in the latter part of the 13th century mentions the erection of a shrine to Anjaneya at Somanath as a component of the Saiva pentad.[15] And it has a curious echo in Maharashtra in the *Jnanesvari* of Jnanesvara completed in A.D. 1290. Jnanesvara, describing the chariot of Arjuna as it came to the battlefield, while vouchsafing the information already contained in the *Mahabharata* that the monkey, Hanuman, was perched on the banner-staff, adds the valuable comment that he was Sankara incarnate.[16] Maruti-Hanuman to the 13th century Maharashtrian elite was an incarnation of Sankara. In one or two very late *Puranas,*[17] there is a story of the semen of Sankara and not of Vayu having been the origin of Hanuman but that would not justify Hanuman's being called an incarnation of Sankara. However it happened, after about the 10th century in the development of the Saiva theology when Hanuman must have come to be identified with a form of Siva.

Ramananda about the first quarter of the 14th century, who was the staunchest propagator of the cult of Rama, could hardly have forgotten Hanuman and his special suitability as a help in the task before him. Ramananda is said to have composed a song in Hindi on Hanuman.[18] The military organization of some of the ascetic orders of the school of Ramananda—they were organized for fighting in the cause of religion—uses the picture of Hanuman as a symbol on its banner.[19]

The Maharashtrian contemporary of Ramananda was the fervent devotee of Vithoba of Pandharpur, Namadev. In his *Gatha,* collection of poems, he has not only eulogized the wisdom of Hanuman in selecting Rama as his master and companion but has provided incidentally very interesting information about Hanuman's being already a specific deity in rural Maharashtra or rather Deccan.[20] Namadev says that the

Hanumanta of a deserted village is incompetent and useless. He implies (1) that in the Deccan villages of his time Hanuman was a deity put up in almost every village as its protector; (2) that He could be a potent force in a village which was in a flourishing condition.

In the latter half of the *Ramayana,* which of course, chronologically, however late it may be, must belong to a very much earlier epoch than the one we are concerned with here, two very important statements about Hanuman are made, which must be recorded. One is that he was destined to be the founder of a school of grammar and an expert on Vedic exegesis and in all branches of learning; and the other, that he had earned a boon, of which Rama reminded him when Hanuman desired to accompany Rama to the other world, that he was to live on earth ageless and deathless, the eternal celibate.[21]

Tulasidasa went further in portraying Hanuman, first, in the role of Rama's devotee and invariably present attendant and then in the aspect of a superior and powerful divinity-like person. In Valmiki's *Ramayana,* Hanuman, as already noted, is sent off along with others by Rama after his coronation; and evidently he returned to Kishkindha with his chiefs Sugriva and Angada. Tulasidasa,[22] on the other hand, represents Hanuman to have appealed to his chief Sugriva, after the leave-taking send off is over, to be permitted to stay on at Ayodhya with Rama and Sita in order that he may serve them. In pursuance of his chosen task Hanuman is declared by Tulasidasa to be the most fortunate individual and the greatest devotee of Rama; and that momentous declaration is presented as the opinion expressed by Siva to his dear consort Parvati. At the final stage, when Rama is about to depart from this world Tulasidasa not only makes him address Hanuman as 'son' but also pronounce a benediction that Hanuman may live as long as the sun and the moon so that men may trascend their difficulties by praying to or rather calling upon Hanuman for help. This is the charter of Hanuman-worship current today as far as the elite are concerned. The 'vira' cult of the folk-culture vitalizes it among the common people.

The ideological make-up of Hanuman's deification in Northern India is thus seen to have proceeded apace from

Saivite origins to Ramaist complex and may be said to have culminated with Tulasidasa by the beginning of the 17th century.

The story of Hanuman's Divinity in the south may now be followed from the stage where we left it. In actual representation and not in literary, theological or ideological reference, next to Hanuman's sculptural representation at Verula (Ellora) and before Namadev's attestation of Hanuman-worship in rural Deccan, Hanuman's membership of the Rama-complex in temple-worship is known from further south. According to Gopinath Rao[23] the bronze figures of Rama, Lakshmana, Sita and Hanuman belonging to the Shermadevi temple in Tinnevelly district are to be dated about the 12th or the 13th century. In a Vaishnava temple at Kanchi, which can hardly be later than the 15th century on its walls are inscribed verses in Samskrit in praise of Hanuman consecrated in a temple nearby. There is also a reference to what is apparently another temple of Hanuman in Kanchi which is, however, in Tamil language.[24] There are at least two inscriptional records attesting the existence of two Hanuman temples in Mysore dominion before the middle of the 16th century, one at Huruvali and the other at Manneyasamudra.[25]

The Hindu resurgence in Maharashtra in the latter half of the 17th century was curiously accompanied by a passionate, even calculated, and certainly persistent and organized movement for the cultivation and propagation of faith in Hanuman or Maruti and of his worship. It cannot possibly be a mere accident that such a mild, self-effacing personality as Tukarama, who in his sustained and calm piety stood a number of indignities, harrassment and persecution without, as tradition avers, the slightest show or even feeling of anger or rancour or even protest, should have composed and handed down to Maharastrian posterity the most open declaration of faith in the might of Hanuman together with his famed achievements as supporting evidence. Nor did he allow the Maharashtrian tradition of identifying Maruti or Hanuman as an incarnation of Siva, first mentioned by Jnanesvara, to go unnoticed. Says Tukarama: "Revered Hanumanta I supplicate you, the messenger of Rama, and request you to

show me the royal roads of devotion. You have always been brave and courageous in your duties to your master. Oh, the son of Anjani, you are Rudra himself!... Hanumant, the mighty one, scorched the beard of Ravana and burnt Lanka after flying thereto." And he bows to Hanuman with the powerful and appealing announcement in the Indian cultural milieu in general and in that of the 17th century Maharashtra in particular thus: "Though born in a monkey-family Hanumanta has adamantine body and can gather the whole world in his tail. He has subdued Cupid and banished Time." The last statement is a reference to the fact of Hanuman's being recognized as an everlasting and youthful bachelor. To be able to transcend time and passion and to possess a strong body as hard as adamant have been the ideals of perfection to be achieved, and have been looked upon as the source of immense and unsurpassable power. Tukarama has even—so it appears to me in the present state of my mythological knowledge—invented a particularly great exploit for his Hanumant. He says that Rama and Lakshmana were once taken away to the netherworld by some Goddess and that Hanumant vanquishing her had brought them back.[26] So powerful, so dutiful and so kind is Hanumant.

It was Ramadasa, the contemporary of Tukarama, however, who sponsored the cause of Maruti-Hanuman in Maharashtra, raising temples to his worship from one end of Maharashtra to the other. He too, spoke of Hanuman as an incarnation of Rudra.[27] He, more than any other person in the post-Muslim Maharashtra, laid down the norm of worship. In doing this, he prescribed daily visit to temples of certain Deities. For the sixth type of devotion to God consists in daily homage paid to Him. The Samskrit distich specially framed for inculcation of this advice runs: "Sight of Sankara, Seshasayi, Sun and Maruti is very meritorious when it is regularly carried out." Ramadasa further exhorted that the image of Hanumant should be set up in one's house for daily worship, though Hanumant is only one of the many Gods whose images are mentioned for such treatment.[28]

The actual spread of temples to Hanuman and of Hanuman-worship is best begun with a statement of the temples and their presiding deities at Pandharpur which is

Maharashtra's temple-city and religious capital. G. H. Khare's[29] record names about 55 temples and their Deities. Among them, leaving out those for the main Deity of the place, Vithoba and His consorts, 12 are claimed by Siva, 10 by Devis, 6 by Maruti, 4 by Ganapati, 3 each by Rama and Datta, 2 by Krishna, a few by Vishnu in other forms and a few by various other Deities like Jyotiba. Of the six Maruti temples, one is that of red Maruti, another of black Maruti and the third of 'Panchamukhi' Maruti. The last form, five-faced, of Maruti appears to be a speciality of Maharashtra.[30] One such Maruti, then known as Hanumant, in the Poona of Bajirav II is listed and I have already noted the image in an earlier chapter where, too, I have stressed the growth of Hanuman-worship as indicated by the larger number of his temples in the Municipal Poona of nineteen-fifties. I should add here that a shrine, an ordinary tin-shed by the roadside, housing the image of Panchamukhi Hanuman can be seen at Worli at the junction known as Worli-Naka in the city of Bombay. No example of a five-faced image of Hanuman is known from elsewhere in India.

Apropos of the five-faced image of Hanuman, which for the present at least must be considered to be a peculiarity of Maharashtra, I should like to draw the readers' attention to the fact, already mentioned in its proper context, of both Siva and Ganesa having such representation. It is but reasonable that Hanuman should get five faces in Maharashtra and in Poona, where belief in His having been an incarnation of Siva has been current since before Jnanesvara's time and where similar five-faced image of Siva has been in actual worship for a long period, how long we do not know.

The red Maruti temple at Pandharpur is said to have been built by Ramadasa and was renovated in A.D. 1730.[31] The Dulya Maruti temple in Poona was built by a Brahmin about A.D. 1680; it was renovated in about 1780 and a second temple of the same Deity was added to it. About A.D. 1830 they were joined together to form one whole. The Deity has been given the special name, which is peculiar in not being based on the colour or the material of the image, of Dulya 'rocking' because the image is believed to have "swayed with grief" when the Maratha armies were being cut to pieces on the field of Panipat

by Ahmad Shah's men in A.D. 1761.[32] This last tradition bespeaks the belief of the rural folks of the Deccan in Maruti as the God presiding over Maharashtra's martial spirit and fortunes, a belief which must have been fostered by Ramadasa and his disciples. It must have gathered strength as Shivaji went on achieving one great deed after another and honouring Ramadasa.

Whether Maruti or Hanuman, who is now the God of wrestlers not only in Maharashtra but elsewhere in India, enjoyed that position in Maharashtra before Ramadasa's time I have been unable to ascertain. Every 'akhada' gymnasium, in Maharashtra keeps a picture of Hanuman as its patron Deity. Since when the institution of 'akhada' has been in existence I do not know. Perhaps it came into vogue as a result of Ramadasa's preaching and Shivaji's encouragement; perhaps these circumstances only served as a vigorous tonic to an already existing institution. However it may be, in the story of the later exploits of Maharashtra these 'akhadas' and their Hanuman must have played a significant role.

In South India, Hanuman's position though in the matter of shrines appears to be low as very few of them are either old or well-known, is well assured in folk culture. There is no Hanuman temple listed in the *Gazetteer of Tanjore*. In the temples or religious institutions mentioned in the *Manual of Cuddapah District*, however, there are two temples of Anjaneyaswami out of the total fourteen. In *Salem district Gazetteer*,[33] on the other hand, we come across the significant note: "Among the masses, Hanuman, as Rama's *fac-totum*, seems at one time to have enjoyed a popularity, second only to that of Vignesvara. In addition to his association with all Vishnu temples, huge bas-reliefs are to be found throughout the District...." many of them having been carved on enormous boulders. The most famous South Indian temple of Hanuman is at Sholingur in Cuddapah district.[34] As Jagadisa Ayyar has it: "There is a powerful Anjaneya on a hillock here." And be it noted that at the same place stands one of the most famous Narasimha temples.

In Bengal among the 50 temples listed in the districts of Hooghly, Manbhum, Nadia and Santal Parganas there figures not a single one dedicated to Hanuman by himself.

On the other hand, in the Rajasthan city of Jaipur, Hanuman shrines numbering 18 rank next to Ganapati-ones, which are 19, in a total of about 330 shrines.

There is a birth-anniversary of Hanuman, 'jayanti', noted in many of the almanacs of the Indo-Aryan speaking regions. And it is observed in a number of places but the festival is not much patronised by the elite and the elderly people and as a holiday compares very unfavourably with the 'jayantis' of Krishna or Rama. It falls on the bright fifteenth of the lunar month of Chaitra, about six days after Rama's ninth.

Hanuman has the distinction of having a special day for his worship or for visiting his temples. On a Saturday Hanuman's shrine is a scene of crowding visitors, both young and old, bringing a little oil and red lead and/or flowers of the aucun-cotton plant, so dear to him. Some of them would be seen breaking coconuts at his feet. These and some of the others too would be found to be people, who have achieved some object of their desire, such as success in an examination or who desire to be protected from visitations of ghosts and spirits. As a matter of fact, outside the wrestlers and ascetics groups, Hanuman passes for a deity that keeps away ghosts and spirits and/or procures success in examinations and such other undertakings. D. C. Sen[35] writing in 1911 observed about the role of Hanuman in Bengal that in the new ideal of the people he "typified devotion to a master" as Ekalavya to "the spiritual preceptor." I do not think that Hanuman is currently thought of in that role in any other region of India.

14

DEVI: FEMALE PRINCIPLE BRIDGES THE GULF BETWEEN THE FOLK AND THE ELITE

The fifth member of the pentad of Hindu worship is known by the generic term Devi, meaning goddess, i.e. the Female Principle in Divinity. And in the standard enumeration of the schools of theology and sects of worship she is appropriately designated as Sakti, the Prowess of Divinity. She is conceived as the Female Principle being the complement of the Male Principle, God. Though Devi or the Famale Principle is thus mentioned in the singular, it is clear that Devi is a complex, at least, of the Female Principles, who are the Prowesses, or Consorts, in purely human ideology and terminology, of those Gods of the pentad whom mythology has invariably provided with such. And in so far as these consorts of any Gods of the pentad may be more than one, their number and their names by which they are known would be still larger and more numerous. As the Gods of the pentad, at least one of them certainly and another very probably, may figure in various manifestations or incarnations, their consorts too may appear in different garbs with appropriate names. For it is a fact writ large in Hindu mythology that specific occasion and particular function have been adopted as the bases for naming, Deities. And it appears to me that it is but natural and logical in the Hindu theology and theogony. All this variety of Devis, different consorts of different Gods of the pentad, their varied manifestations and their appropriate names may be legitimately considered as the complex called Devi by the elite, whatever the form of worship that may be used in their case.

On the other hand, there have been ghosts, spirits, godlings or gods conceived of in folk-culture, for whom no mythology or next to no mythology is known except some oral tradition, differing, owing to its very nature, not only from

region to region but even within a specific region from place to place, both in names and functions, which have been looked upon as feminine entities. Such of them as are not treated merely as kinds of ghosts but are termed Devis, Matas or Ammas, are the counterparts of the Devis of elite mythology. And they can be and are accommodated in the pentadic Devi. For Mata is a Samskrit word meaning 'mother' which in Dravidian languages is 'Amma'. Thus they are all Divine mothers. The folk-culture and elite-culture in theology at least thus get integrated in the pentadic complex of Devi, whether or not any of the dignified, high-brow, moral and even stern Gods of the pentad is a common heritage of both.

One of the elements in this bridge-building process was appraised by E. W. Hopkins[1] half a century ago when he wrote "The cult of the disease-goddess in the epic is expanded in modern times into a definite cult of Mari-amma as destructive." It will be seen later that the cult of disease-goddess is older than the epic of the *Mahabharata*. And enough data will be presented to modify Hopkin's contended sequence in order to state the correct position.

Reversing my previous procedure I shall begin with the recent and current worship of goddesses in Tamilnad. Mari-amma and goddesses in general have been considered to be a contribution of Dravidian culture to the Hindu complex. A brief statement about her worship or worship of Amma available in the *Gazetteers*, most of which were compiled in the first decade of the twentieth century, will help the reader to appreciate the modification in Hopkin's views which I consider necessary and to realize the validity of my initial assertion. Observes the compiler of the *Gazetteer* of *Tinnevelly district*:[2] "Midway between the orthodox gods and the demons come the female deities or Ammas, *whose worship is an interesting blend of Brahmanical and Dravidian ritual.* These goddesses have their own proper pujaris [ministrants], either Ochans or Vellalans, and in the more important temples daily puja [worship] is performed. On fast days a Brahmin usually officiates as priest..... Ammans who receive no flesh offerings [even on festive days] are to be found everywhere; but the vast majority, those who under various names are manifestations of Kali exact blood. Bhadrakali is the prototype of these

goddesses, a terrible creature." I should like to tell the reader if he is not aware of the fact, that not only Kali but even Bhadrakali are old and venerable names of Parvati or Siva's Sakti in elite mythology and theology. There is evidence to prove that both wine and flesh formed a part of the offerings to be made at worship of many Goddesses of Indo-Aryan mien and origin referred to or enjoined in epic and other literature. When therefore the compiler of the *Gazetteer of Tinnevelly* opines that the Dravidian nature of the Goddesses is proved by the part played by the offering of flesh and the sacrifice of animals to these Deities in South India, he is clearly wrong being misled to that view because of the recent and current aversion to such offering in Brahmanic worship.

I should like to state here though it is not in its chronological context, the fact that the promulgator of festivals, fasts and mode of worship, Hemadri[3] of the 13th century prescribing the observance of the 'mahanavami', the 9th of the bright half of Asvin, blandly proclaimed that animals such as buffaloes sacrificed to a Deity gain salvation and that the slaughterers of these animals do not incur sin. Anancient Indo-Aryan practice was thus not only defended but stabilized by Hemadri with his authoritative charter of freedom from sin issued to the slaughterer of a sacrificial animal, be it a buffalo or a goat. The practice was clearly current in Maharashtra in the 13th century. Jnanesvara,[4] who lived in the generation immediately succeeding Hemadri, in one of his telling and informative illustrations conveys the information that buffaloes were sacrified to Chandika and that the ministrants of the Deity would have considered the performance of the rite to be meaningless and devoid of expected benefit if the animal to be sacrificed and the Deity before whom it was to be slaughtered were made of gold! He also imparts the significant information that the ministrants of Chandika were of the Gurav caste. In his 'yogic'-philosophical interpretation of the practice of a buffalo being sacrificed to Chamunda he identifies Chamunda with the prowess of 'prana' and buffalo with 'mind', 'manas', the lower levels of the soul-force which has to be excited into activity through the 'yogic' technique.

Before passing further I must mention another interesting small fact which corroborates my viewpoint regarding the

genesis and role of Devi in the cultural amalgam called Hinduism. And that is that according to Janesvara[5] the worshippers of Durga, offering Her their obeisance on the 14th of a month and to Nava Chandi on the 9th, that being Her special day, used to address Her as 'mother' 'maya' which is the Konkani Marathi equivalent of 'amma'.

F. J. Richards equipped with more anthropology than most of the compilers of *Gazetteers*, writing in 1915 in the *Gazetteer of Salem district*[6] compared the assimilation of the village goddesses and Saktis of Siva with the syncretism suggested in the cult of the *Mother Goddess* in Western Asia through the absorption of the goddesses of Egypt, Babylonia, Persia, Greece and Rome. But he, too, did not find much that is common to the cult of Siva as observed by Brahmins and the cult and worship of the 'grama devatas' or the village goddesses of South India. Evidently he did not search for analogies in the cult and worship of Devi or Sakti among the Brahmanic classes. He, however, furnishes the valuable information that "orthodox Hinduism" of South India enumerates nine Saktis of Siva—readers may please note at this stage that 'Navadurga', 'nine Durgas' or 'Nava Chandi' 'nine Chandis' are the accepted Brahmanic pantheon of Devis. Let me note down the names of the nine Saktis as they figure in Tamilnad according to Richards. They are: (1) Mariamman, (2) Ellamma, (3) Ankalamma, (4) Pidari, (5) Chamundi, (6) Bhadrakali, (7) Durga, (8) Purnai and (9) Pudkalai. Of the many others who are not grouped under the Durga-complex Richards names the following (1) Pattalamman, (2) Selli-amman, (3) Nachi amman, (4) Gangamma, (5) Padavattamman, (6) Ponnamma, (7) Pongalamman and (8) Muttiyalamman.

It is seen that among the seventeen named Goddesses, four, viz., Bhadrakali, Chamundi, Durga and Gangamma are Indo-Aryan Goddesses, three being the standard forms of Devi and the fourth the river-goddess. In another connection Richards tells his readers that Selliamman "appears indistinguishable from Kali." The shrine of this Goddess at Alambakkam in Trichinopoly district is, according to Jagadisa Ayyar, "important for the special worship of" the seven maidens, 'Saptakanyakas', who are said to have helped Siva to dispose of the demon Andhakasura. The speciality of this demon was

that from his blood dropping on the ground fresh demons used to arise. The so-called 'Saptamatrikas', 'Seven Mothers', of the standard mythology and of sculptural representation known in the place referred to here as seven maidens, helped Siva by drinking the blood of the demon as it oozed out from his body before it had a chance to fall on the ground. From the epigraphical record it is clear that the local temple of Selliamman was in existence before the 10th century A.D. This identification and connection with Siva and the early worship of this form of Goddess demonstrates the viewpoint of Devi-worship put forward by me at the very outset. Devi or Devis have served as a strong connecting link between the folk and the elite. Further, the nine bountiful rivers of the country, whose names an orthodox gentleman of Brahmanic culture pronounces as he takes his bath, with slight variation are also conceived of as 'nine maidens' in South India. The variation in so far as it omitted the Sindhu from the enumeration has proved prophetic, Sindhu being now not a river of India. The nine rivers represented at Kumbhakonam by statues are Ganga, Yamuna, Sarayu, Sarasvati, Narmada, Mahanadi, Godavari, Kaveri and Palar. Here the other concept of Hindu mythology, viz., nine Durgas is mixed with 'seven mothers' who not infrequently too are counted as nine. Altogether it is an amalgam designed to integrate the sentiments of the people around the country and the Brahmanic religious complex.[7]

How many of the remaining names from Richards' list can similarly be equated with standard Brahmanic names occurring in the Devi-complex I am unable to state definitely; but evidently Purnai may be the same as Annapurna and Padavattamman identical with Padmavati. Richards' list does not exhaust South Indian Goddesses. In the district *Gazetteer of Madura*[8] at least two more, Vandikaliamman and Muttalamma, are mentioned the former being equated to Kali, that name occurring as a part of the whole name of the Deity. South Arcot[9] provides at least one more, named Kamala Kanni Ammal.

Most of the village Goddesses of Andhradesa appear to be differnt from those so far enumerated. The names of those I have collected[10] are: (1) Chamalamma, (2) Mavalamma,

(3) Mutyalamma, (4) Nukalamma, (5) Paidi Muramma, (6) Pallalamma, and (7) Ramachandramma.

The goddesses under various names have received and are offered today popular worship; but the shrines of most of them are not listed in any account of old temples. In Salem district as Richards states the shrines of Mariamma are almost ubiquitous in the rural areas; yet among the temples mentioned along with their deities the two Devi temples of the district are dedicated to Bhadrakali, one being at Mecheri and the other at Taramangala.[11]

In Tanjore district 4 Devi temples figure among the 95 temples listed separately. Two of these are dedicated to Mariamman, the favourite goddess of South Indian villages. The Mariamman temple near Tanjore presents a great scene on the occasion of the annual festival of Mariamman. About 1875, we are told there used to gather a crowd of about 20000 visitors on that occasion. The other Mariamman temple of the district, the one at Negapatam, was well-known on account of its having Brahmin priests as the ministrants, Brahmins in such service of village-goddesses being a rare phenomenon.[12]

Apropos of the Brahmanic connection with the Mariamman temple of Negapatam it may be pointed out that Mariamma is not confined to Tamilnad and Andhradesa but is met with in Mysore-Karnatak and even in Maharashtra. When she is the deity of the populace at large in Maharashtra she is often called Jarimari; but far more frequently she is the Deity patronised by the Mahar caste of Maharashtra. As the patron-deity of Mahars, however, Mariai, as she is called, tends to share the honours with Lakshmiai in the caste. This spread of Mariai in Maharashtra indicates her acceptance by the elite section of Indo-Aryan culture to certain extent. And the mutual rapprochement of the folk and elite cultures is demonstrated explicitly in Mari being equated with Chandi in the Samskrit lexicon named *Ratnamala*.[13]

The third Devi temple of Tanjore district, the one at Peruvalandan in Mannargudi taluka, is that of 'Annapurna' and is in current worship. 'Annapurna', a name also of Parvati, as the provider of food, is an old Indo-Aryan concept. In Vedic texts 'Purandhi' stood for the goddess of plenty. Parvati in her 'Annapurna' aspect, laddling out food to Siva

is represented in the famous temple of Vidyasankara, dating from the 14th century, standing at Sringeri. Clay images of her are still annually worshipped in Bengal. A temple of Bhagavati 'Pishtapuri', is mentioned in an inscription from Khoh, in Nagaud district, the place famous for Siva linga. She is alternatively called 'Pishtapurika Devi' in the record, which is dated A.D. 529. It is as significant a name as Annapurna; whereas 'Annapurna', meaning 'provider of food' is general, 'Pishtapuri', meaning 'supplier of flour' is more specific. According to Col. Tod the great Devi-festival of Rajasthan known as 'Gangaur' is centred round Her, "as the benefactor of mankind". "The festival being entirely female, not a single male mixed in the immense groups and even Iswara [Siva] himself, the husband of Gauri, attracts no attention, as appears from his ascetic or mendicant form begging his dole from the bounteous and universal mother."[14]

Another old deity, who must have belonged to the Indo-Aryan complex of goddesses as she received special attention in the *Baudhayanagrihyaseshasutra,*[15] Jyeshtha is considered to be the elder sister of Lakshmi. We are assured by Srinivasan that her shrines are as popular as those of 'Pidari', though Gopinath Rao writing more than forty years before him was sure that her worship had become almost obsolete.[16]

The more substantial temples and the older ones in Tamilnad and Andhradesa dedicated to Devi are as follows: Devi in the 'Mahishasuramardini' form, the form in which Devi killed the demon Mahishasura and is generally either four-armed or eight-armed. The iconological texts, beginning with the *Abhilashitarthachintamani,* the earliest to specify the Mahishasuramardini image, prescribe only either ten or twenty arms for this image.[17] The huge bas-relief of this form in the cave-temple at Mahabalipura near Madras is not only the most vigorous and appealing but is also the earliest representation of the Devi in the South, being of the early Pallava age, about A.D. 650. She is represented as riding a lion and is provided with eight arms. The relief of the Goddess at Verula (Ellora) is very much like it in the image and is more animated but less triumphant. It is a little later in date. The one at Aihole in Bijapur district, not so good though conforming in the matter of arms, is earlier being dated

in the 6th century. The small shrine with a relief of the Deity at Badami belongs to a complex of caves dated A.D. 578. An inscription from Gaya district ascribable to the 6th or the 7th century begins with an invocation to Devi who stands with her foot disdainfully placed on the head of the demon Mahishasura.[18] The ten-armed image is preferred for Durga-puja the annual festival of Bengal.[19]

Mahishasurmardini's temple at Gangaikondasholapuram is perhaps the oldest temple of Devi in that form and under that name, the other representations from the 3rd century onwards whether in North India or in South being sculptural representations in other temples. It is dated in the 11th century A.D.[20] The Durga Kali temple at Trichinopoly of the 18th century is a late structure but very interesting for the composite name of the Devi, the two separate forms as Durga and Kali having been combined. Kanaka Durga of Bezwada, Andhradesa, is peculiar in the appellation of the Deity. The Devi temple at Kanyakumari in the extreme south is dedicated to Bhagavati, a name for Devi which is attested in the form Bhadrarya in a Patna district inscription of the sixth decade of the fifth century A.D. A little later, from the region about Sirohi in Rajasthan an epigraph, which from its lettering cannot be dated later than the 8th century A.D., mentions that a temple of 'Kshemarya' was built in A.D. 625. The name 'Kshemarya' conveys almost the same meaning as Bhadrarya just mentioned. As the writer of the paper on the epigraph notes, 'Kshemarya' must be identical with contemporary Khimel 'mata', Mother Khimel as the Goddess of the temple where the record was discovered is known to the local people, though in elite counting She is "ordinarily supposed to be a form of Durga." As a feature of further interest may be mentioned the fact that the record, which is perhaps the earliest of such and may even be unique at so early a period, refers to a courtezan, Buta by name, as attached to that temple. About two and a half centuries later we have the Goddess Bhagavati, mentioned as the patron Deity of three Gurjara-Pratihara kings of Kanauj. There is a Kali temple at Cranganore in Malabar where the annual festival draws "hundreds" of pilgrims of all castes. The peculiarity of this temple is that from of old even the polluting castes were per-

mitted to enter its outer precincts to offer worship to the Goddess who is specifically called Bhagavati.[21]

The Devis so far mentioned, except Jyeshtha, are various forms of the Saktis of Siva or of Durga or Parvati; and Mariamman certainly and perhaps other forms like Pidari, which are specifically Tamilian, have tended to be identified with one or the other of them.

The second group of Devis or the second variety of Devis is the Vaishnava group, the Saktis or consorts of Vishnu. On Kalhana's testimony the idea of the Sakti of Vishnu appears to have been an old one. He informs us that the queen of Ranaditya, a king of Kashmir who reigned in the first quarter of the 3rd century A.D. was an incarnation of the Sakti of Vishnu.[22] The two prominent among them, that have been treated as separate entities entitled to have temples of their own, as is the case with the Saiva Saktis, Durga, Kali, and Mahishasurmardini, are Lakshmi and Padmavati. Padmavati is but a characteristic name of Lakshmi, as the one with a lotus; but she occurs in this appellation in popular worship too and has to be treated as a separate Devi allied to the Vishnu Sakti complex. Padmavati has a temple at Tiruchannoor near the famous Vaishnava centre of Tirupati. Lakshmi, as Gajalakshmi is represented at Mahabalipura. But the most significant temple to her is the one at Doddagaddaralli near Hasan in Mysore. The temple was built in about A.D. 1113. The interesting fact from our viewpoint is the name given to the place by the people. It has tended to be called 'Abhinava-Kollapur', new Kolhapur, because the temple of Mahalakshmi at Kolhapur in Maharashtra is believed to be the prototype of this Devi's temple.[23]

The third variety of Devi is the Sakti of the third God of the Triad, Brahma. Generally only one Devi, Sarasvati, is mentioned. We may, however, look upon Sarada, who is the special Devi of certain religious centres, as another variety of Brahma's Saktis. Kashmir has been long known as the home of Devi Sarada; and Kalhana in the second half of the 12th century testified to the fame of the temple. He tells his readers that the people of Gauda who were bent on wreaking revenge on Lalitaditya-Muktapida, who reigned from A.D. 695 to 732, went to Kashmir in great numbers under the pretext

of visiting the goddess Sarada.[24] Sarada's or Sarasvati's temples are very few indeed. The Sarasvati shrine in a verandah of the temple at Darasuram near Kumbhakonam of about the 11th century A.D. is almost the only one known from published sources so far south. The one at Halebidu in Mysore, with one image in the dancing pose and another with the lyre in her hands, is of the late Vijayaganagar period. The temple at Gangaikondasholapuram is not dated. But the most important temple of this Deity is the Chalukyan one at Gadag in Dharwar district. The temple though small is one of the finest specimens of architectural achievement and the image of Sarasvati is the loveliest of such images.[25]

The fact is the more surprising because there is a large number of iconological texts giving instructions regarding the image of Sarasvati. G. H. Khare's collation[26] lists fifteen prescriptions beginning with two from *Agnipurana*. Of these 15 prescriptions only eight mention the number of arms, perhaps the remaining seven from their silence implying only two, the normal number and hence leaving them unnamed. However that may be, among the eight prescriptions one is specifically for two arms, one for eight and there are six enjoining four arms to the image of Sarasvati. What should be held by Sarasvati in her hands has been specifically stated in 12 cases. And the fact that in nine of these she is prescribed to be provided with a book must lead one to the conclusion that Sarasvati according to the iconological texts is a goddess of books and learning rather that of music as indicated by her holding the both-ends-gourded stringed instrument. This latter insignia is laid down in three prescriptions only. The curious feature of all the six prescriptions, which specifically mention the eyes, enjoining three is evidently the reflection of Sarasvati's being, as a Devi, a member of the Saiva complex. And as will be seen later Sarasvati, who has gained herself an assured place in practical and popular religion, invariably figures in the major festival of 'Nine Nights', which is a highly composite festivity.

From South proceeding via Mysore our next station is naturally Maharashtra, particularly as Mahalakshmi's temple of the early part of the 12th century in Mysore territory reminds one of the temple of Mahalakshmi at Kolhapur. Before

proceeding further it must be pointed out that though the Deity in the Kolhapur temple is strictly speaking referred to by the name of Mahalakshmi and though in that part of Marathi-speaking region there is held a great fair of Mahalakshmi, popularly the Kolhapur Deity is known as Ambabai of Kolhapur.

In the early eighteen-eighties there were about 250 temples in Kolhapur city. Kolhapur was thus perhaps better placed than even Poona at that time in the matter of temples in relation to the total population. The great contrast between the two cities however showed itself in the nature of their important and well-known temples. In Poona among 19 such temples there figured only four consecrated to Devi. In Kolhapur on the other hand among six such temples all, except one of Vithoba, were Devi shrines. In the *Gazetteer of Poona,* the temple of Red Jogesvari, so-called to distinguish the Deity from another Jogesvari not very far off who is termed Black, is described as one of the two, the other being, as already mentioned in the proper context, that of Ganapati, which have to be visited for formal invitation on all auspicious occasions before invitations can be conveyed to human beings. Further, the reader is categorically told that it "dates back to the sixth or seventh century A.D."[27] No authority is quoted, nor is any reason given for ascribing such an old date to the temple. Goddess Jogesvari is a tutelary Deity of the Chitpavan Brahmins, though in her ancient or rather popular form as for example in Jogai of Ambe—a village or town from which a substantial number of important Chitpavan families migrated to Konkan—she occurs as a Goddess among the Deccan rural complex of Devis. And in the first edition of the *Gazetteer* (Vol. III) which was compiled about 1880 there is nothing about the date of the temple of Jogesvari. I am, therefore, not disposed to accept the date of the temple ascribed to it without further evidence in favour of it. I shall take the temple of Bhavani at Patan near Chalisgav as the historically attested earliest temple of Devi in Maharashtra.

According to J. N. Banerjea, among the many names of Devis occurring in some of the later Vedic literature occurs the name Bhavani along with Durga etc.[28] That Bhavani was looked upon as a consort of Siva even before the 4th century

B.C. is clear from Panini's derivation of Bhavani as a derivative from Bhava. Panini further provides the interesting information that Bhava was the name by which Siva was known among the Bahikas, the westerners, whereas Sarva was the one popular with the easterners.[29] J. N. Banerjea asserted that there are Gupta-records which mention the erection of shrines to Bhavani among other divinities. One of such records, the one from the Nagarjuni Hill in Gaya district, is of the Maukhari chief Anantavarman and cannot be later than the 7th century A.D. Another, the Banaras inscription of Pantha, which on palaeographical grounds is assigned to the beginning of the 8th century, mentions not only the installation of an image of Bhavani but also the construction of a shrine to her.[30] A still later reference to Bhavani hails from further west. Mahipala I, a Gurjara-Pratihara king of Kanauj who ruled from A.D. 893 to 900 is mentioned as having been a devotee of Bhavani.[31]

Bhavani has the most hallowed and stirring associations in Maharashtra. She was the patron Goddess of Shivaji. The particular Bhavani to whom Shivaji looked up for inspiration and success was that of Tuljapur. In Maharashtra, therefore, the Deity is better known as Tulaja Bhavani than mere Bhavani. Ramadasa,[32] the 17th century ascetic-saint-politician, has at least mentioned the Goddess as Tulajabhovani. He has certified once generically and another time in particular reference to Shivaji and his mission that she is a competent Goddess generally ready to help Her devotees. Shivaji installed an image of Bhavani at Pratapgad where he disposed of the great danger to him in the form of the well-known Muslim general Afzalkhan. The temple of Bhavani in Poona, after whom a ward of the city is named, was built by public subscription only in A.D. 1760.

Next in importance and in chronological order too comes the temple of Mahalakshmi or Ambabai at Kolhapur, which is older than 13th century A.D. It is said that the idol had to be hidden away during the 14th and 15th centuries, the period of intense Muslim presecution. It was reinstalled in A.D. 1722 by Sambhaji, the son of Shivaji. The temple is unique in being a three-domed one. Under the large central dome is placed the chief idol, viz. of Ambabai, the northern

and southern domes, which are smaller, accommodating the images of Mahakali and Mahasarasvati respectively. While the image of Kolhapur Ambabai is four-armed and cannot be considered to be a form of Durga Mahishamardani, that of Pandharpur is eight-armed and is clearly in the Mahisha-suramardini form.[34]

Four other Devi temples specially mentioned as important are those of Mahakali, Temblai, Yellamma and Phirangai. Mahakali is well-known. The second and third Devis are Dravidian and have local complexion. Goddess Phirangai who figures in a few places in Poona district—two are listed in the section on places in the *Gazetteer* and at least two have been recorded in my investigation[35] of Haveli taluka—is identified by the contributor to the *Gazetteer* with Samskritic 'Pratyangiras'. Among the Devis at Pandharpur nine temples having been noted by G. H. Khare,[36] figure, besides the Samskritic ones of elite mythology, viz. Lakshmi, Sakambhari, Annapurna, Sarasvati and Padmavati, also Lakhubai and Yamai.

I have already stated the position about Devi-worship in Poona at the beginning of the 19th century and its great spread in the century and a half that has elapsed since, and have stressed the ruralization of Poona city in religious matters through its closer affiliation with the Devi-worship current in the hundred and twenty odd villages of Haveli taluka. I shall only add here the interesting information about the ramification of Devis, making it a complex, which through the generalized name Devi affiliates itself with the pentadic complex and integrates the folk and the elite in the matter of religious culture.

I have been able to spot at least fiftysix names of Devis, whether they have a shrine or not, whether they are represented by any recognisable and distinct image of their own or whether any stone of any shape and size locally called by a specific name represents Her. They are as follows: (1) Ambai, (2) Bolai, (3) Chaundai, (4) Deviai, (5) Ghodubai, (6) Godubai, (7) Hankariai, (8) Jamai, (9) Janabai, Janiai, Janai or Janubai, (10) Jakhmata or Jakhai, (11) Jalvani Devi, (12) Jambhaljai, (13) Jogesvari or Jogai, (14) Joraljai, (15) Kadjai, (16) Kalkai, (17) Kalubai, (18) Karanjai, (19) Kelajai,

(20) Ketakbai, (21) Kherjai, (22) Khoklai, (23) Kotharjai, (24) Kumbaljai or Kambaljai, (25) Kunjai, (26) Lakshmiai, (27) Lanjai, (28) Lohajabai, (29) Mahlai or Malai, (30) Manjrai, (31) Mariai, (32) Mukai, (33) Nagai or Nagjai, (34) Navlai (35) Oshadjai, (36) Padmavati or Padubai, (37) Pangarjai, (38) Phirangai, (39) Phodiai or Phodjai, (40) Pipparjai, (41) Ranubai, (42) Sarjai, (43) Satiai or Satvai, (44) Sitaladevi, (45) Sirsai, (46) Somjai, (47) Taljai or Talja, (48) Tanjai, (49) Tukai, (50) Tuljai, (51) Vadjai, (52) Vaghjai, (53) Vagjubai, (54) Vardani, (55) Vasaddai, and (56) Yamai.

The Mahar caste of Maharashtra has been devoted only to a Goddess, there having been no other temple attested as being theirs. Out of the 120 villages of Haveli taluka tapped for the investigation, already referred to more than once, 96 furnished information about the particular Goddess whose shrine was more or less in the ownership of this caste. In 45 of these only Mariai was in evidence, while in 25 only Lakshmiai. In 19 villages both Mariai and Lakshmiai were found. In 7 villages it was stated that Lakshmiai and Mariai were identical and that no difference was made by the local people. Among the 43 and odd temples recorded in the places-section of the *District Gazetteer of Poona* there figure eight temples of Devis consecrated to seven different Devis, viz. Phirangai, Chamunda, Chaunda, Hastabai, Padmavati, Taljai and Tukai. To this list should be added the temple of Ekavira at Karle caves and the Devi temples mentioned as distinguished in Poona city gazetteer.

To impress on the readers' mind the integrative role of Devi-cult I shall now name the few principal Devis that I have casually noted from the writings of Jnanesvara, Namdev, Tukarama and Ramadasa. Jnanesvara mentions Mahalaya, the source of the universe, as having Her abode at about old Devgiri on the Godavari. He states that people of Maharashtra paid their homage and offered their worship to Durga, the Mother, on the 14th of a month, to Nava Chandi on the 9th, just as they did the same to Ganesa on the 4th, to Cobra on the 5th, to Vishnu-Krishna on the 11th or to Bhairav on Sunday and Siva on Monday.[37] Namadev[38] mentions Shashthi, Katyayani, Durga and Bhavani as connected with the 9th of a month.

Tukarama[39] mentions Ekavira who was to be satisfied with the sacrifice of a tender lamb, Jyestha Devi, Yogesvari, Chamunda, Jakhai, Jokhai, Mayarani, Mesabai and Chandi. About the two Goddesses, Mesabai and Mayarani, Ramadasa,[40] who names them Mesako and Mayerani respectively, adds the interesting detail that they are connected with water. The others that he mentions are : Satvai, Bansankari, Bhagavati, Jakhamata, Bala, Bagula, Tukai, Bhagavati, Manavini, Katyayani, Jakhini, Chmunda and Annapurna. Of these, Banasamkari, Bhagavati, Jakhamata, Bala, Bagula and Annapurna are stated to be in household worship. Others like Manavini, Katyayani, Jakhini, Chamunda and Tukai are described either as Saktis of Siva or as only Saktis. About Banasamkari we get an explanation which shows her usual identification with Sakambhari of elite mythology. And Tukai figures among the important Deities the chant of whose names is fruitful of many good things.

The spread of Devi-cult and worship in the rural Deccan may be judged from the relative number of shrines to Devi and perhaps even better from the relative number of festivals and annual fairs in Her honour. Of festivals I shall speak later as they form part of the elite culture too. Here I shall deal with fairs which characterise the folk-culture, the culture of villages and very small towns. In Poona district, about 1950 some 216 fairs were listed. In 39 cases the Deity in whose honour the fair was held is stated in a general manner without specification. 54 fairs were held in honour of Bhairav, the terrific form of Siva, Mahadeva the usual gentle form of his having only 19. Khandoba who is the patron Deity of many Maratha families secured only 14 fairs and Maruti, who from the relative number of shrines to Him and from His close association with athletes comes very close to being looked upon as the Deity *par excellence* of the rural Deccan, was propitiated with only eight fairs. Under these circumstances, Devis in one form or another having secured to themselves 38 fairs clearly demonstrate their hold on the rural folk of the Deccan.

Three of the twelve annual fairs specifically listed in the revised edition of the *Gazetteer of Poona District* are in honour of one or the other form of Goddess Bhavani. They draw

between them a crowd of 47,000 visitors. And the Marathi almanac for the year 1959-60 listed at least ten other annual Devi-fairs held in Maharashtra. In the city of Bombay and its environs, according to the Gujarati almanac, published at Bombay for the same year, there were two annual fairs for Devi.[41]

The annual fair is not only an occasion for social gathering and economic marketing, not only an occasion for great amusement and some edification but also a sort of a protective rite for the health of the 'socius,' the village.

Maharashtra in the context is the first Indo-Aryan area we have reached and is at the junction of the two streams of cultural flow, the Indo-Aryan elite one and the local folk-element. Here is the proper place to state in brief the history of Devi-cult as we find it in elite literary sources to enable the reader to judge properly how far the view of the integrative role of Devi complex of the pentad put forward here is tenable.

The anthology of Prakrit verses known as *Gatha-Saptasati,* collated by Hala in about 200 A.D., is a work which, representing more or less the folk-culture of the north-eastern part of Maharashtra, is a landmark in the history of cultural fusion and synthesis that had already taken place. The stray references which this work contains—I have drawn on some in the earlier part of this work—to religious and other matters through similies or other figures of speech are indicative of the actual state of sentiment, belief and practice. Making them the starting point for my brief history of Devi-cult I should draw the readers' attention to one reference to Devi temple. The Deity is called Arya. In the *Vayupurana,* (I, 9, 75-86) among the many names and manifestations of Parvati, the consort of Siva, occurs Arya, reminding one of the later North Indian Bhadrarya already mentioned. The reference in the *Gatha-Saptasati* conveys the information that bells were necessarily hung in a temple of Devi Arya. In another passage the sacrifice of a buffalo as an adjunct of the festivity and some preliminary attention paid to the intended sacrificial animal are mentioned.[42] This semi-folk semi-elite reference to the practice of sacrificing a buffalo is surpassed in its significance by the avowal of Sita herself in Valmiki's

Ramayana[43] of an offering to the two Goddesses, personified Ganga and Yamuna. That these rivers were treated as Goddesses even in a more concrete and fervent manner for some centuries must be clear to the readers who have followed the story so far. Early in this chapter I have mentioned the existence of fair-sized statues of these and other rivers existing in a temple in Tamilnad. Sita when crossing the Ganga and again the Yamuna for her exile in the company of Rama and Lakshmana vows to the Rivers that on her safe return after 14 years of sojourn in the forests she will offer to each animal sacrifice, rice-offering and potfuls of wine. In one of these avowals, the animal promised to be sacrificed is mentioned; and it is a bull. Bulls, and buffaloes were sacrificed to certain Goddesses and profuse quantity of wine offered to them as vowed gifts for protection and fulfilment of desires in the Indo-Aryan society of Ayodhya and the eastern U.P. even as late as the first century of the Christian era. In the *Mahabharata*[14] in the Virata-prava section the praise-hymn of Durga makes her as Mahashasuramardini fond of wine and flesh. It will be granted that with such a history of one variety of Devi-worship, buffalo-sacrifice to a Goddess and even wine-offering to Her need not be considered to be a purely non-Aryan contribution to the complex of Hindu worship of Goddesses !

Another trait of the Indo-Aryan culture, comparable to that of personifying such natural objects of great benefit as rivers, is that of imagining a town or a city as incarnate personality and address it as if it were a Goddress. In the *Ramayana*[45] it is stated that when Hanuman reached Lanka he was confronted and accosted by the Goddess Lanka. She forbade him to enter the city and Hanuman had to subdue Her before getting entry into it. No less an intellectual than Kalidasa[46] portrays very vividly incarnate Ayodhya as a Goddess appearing in a dream before Kusa, Rama's son, and pleading the cause of the deserted capital Ayodhya. Kalidasa actually calls Her 'Puh', 'City'.

Still another trait of Indian culture, which it shares in common with some European cultures and is therefore Indo-European rather than Indo-Aryan, is the Deification of abstract qualities and virtues. The most well-known of such Deities

must, of course, be counted those whom Lord Krishna[47] selected as the best of the feminine species to be identified with Him as the Supreme Soul. They are: 'Kirti' fame, 'Sri' splendour, 'Vak' speech, 'Smriti' memory, 'Medha' intelligence, 'Dhriti' fortitude, and 'Kshama' forgiveness. They are thus seven and I am not sure that they are not meant to typify the 'Seven Mothers' of later mythology! E. W. Hopkins' observation on the abstractions being deified in Indian culture through the ages down to the epics succintly summarizes the trait: Hopkins[48] comments: "Memory, Affection, Endurance, Victory, Effort are incorporate forms in the van of Skanda's army, nor can one dismiss them as poetic metaphor; on an equal footing with them stands Lakshmi, Happiness, the well-known wife of Vishnu, and even Effort appears in both epics as an actual being. Some of these abstractions have been raised to high place in the pantheon of active and very real gods. Many of them are Vedic and even pre-Vedic; others are apparently new, yet no one knows how ancient."

In the *Vayupurana*[49] while 'Medha' intelligence, is one of the names of Parvati, the same along with 'Dhriti' fortitude, 'Kirti' fame, 'Lajja' shame, 'Kshanti' forgiveness, 'Tushti' satisfaction, 'Pushti' strength and 'Kriya' activity figure along with some others in the list of Devis born of Siva in His 'Lingodbhava' form. In the *Manavagrihyasutra*[50] we have among the Deities, to whom an oblation is prescribed to be offered in a wish-fulfilling rite, the following Goddesses: 'Sri' splendour, 'Hri' shame, 'Samriddhi' prosperity, 'Jaya' victory and 'Kama' desire.

The story of the many names of Parvati from before the 2nd or the 3rd century A.D. to the later Vedic age has been well stated more than once and the antiquity of her many forms has been firmly established by R. G. Bhandarkar and E. W. Hopkins in particular in their works referred to or quoted many times in this study. One of the latest to do the task in a brief space is J. N. Banerjea[51] whose special contribution lies in deriving the origin of the cult of Goddesses from the hymns of the *Rigveda* which refer to not only 'Vak' logos, 'Prithvi', earth, 'Ushas' dawn, 'Aditi', Divine mother, but also to 'Ratri' night, and 'Purandhi' plenty. As he mentions, one of the hymns is called 'Devisukta', Devi-hymn.

Passing over to Gujarat and Rajasthan, which may justifiably be called the region of 'Matas' or mothers as both the folk and the elite are in the habit of referring to Devis with that appellation, I shall remind the reader that in an earlier chapter I have mentioned that my curiosity about the forms of the Diety current among the people of Saurashtra was whetted by a notice in the daily papers of the recent construction in Cutch of a temple to Ganapati and to the Goddess Asapuri. In Rajkot at the heart of Saurashtra out of the 22 temples 4 are dedicated to Goddesses; and they are (1) Mahalakshmi; (2) Asapuri; (3) Meladi and (4) Bahucharaji. The last three names are new to our list made so far in this study. But Bahucharaji of Pavagad is very famous deity in Gujarat. Bahucharaji is appealed to for redress by the lame, the blind, the impotent and the children. Another Goddess is named 'Revali', whose shrine near Idar attracts the lame, the blind and also the paralytic and the stammering folk for relief. 'Visot' is still another Goddess; but she is resorted to by specific castes rather low down the social ladder like Kolis, Vaghris, Dharalias, Ravalias and others, while 'Vaghesvari' is the patron Deity of Sonis, goldsmiths.[52] Most of the Rajput royal families of Saurashtra have some Devi as their patron Deity. They are : (1) Asapuri; (2) Chamunda; (3) Vindhyavasini; (4) Adya; (5) Mandavri and (6) Khodiyar.

The great royal families of Rajasthan[53] too have patron Goddesses. Four of them of the principal families are represented as having eradicated the evil demons from the earth. They are: (1) Asapuri; (2) Gajan Mata; (3) Keonj Mata and (4) either Sancher Mata or Chawanda Mata. It may be of special interest to note that Goddess Sakambhari, which is a name of Parvati in her aspect of vegetation-multiplier and as we have seen above is equated with the Maharashtrian Brahmin Goddess Banasamkari, who is also known from Badami down south, was the patron Goddres of an illustrious and legendary ancestor of the great Prithviraj Chauhan. That ancestor who lived about A.D. 685, is believed to have built the famous Sambhar lake of Rajasthan and named it so after his tutelary Deity, Sakambhari. Tod assures his readers that a statue of this Goddress stands on a small island in that lake.[54] Among other Goddesses mentioned

by Tod[55] figure: (1) Bhavani; (2) Bijaiseni Mata; (3) Chamunda; (4) Gauri; (5) Jogini Mata; (6) Kalika Devi; (7) Mama Devi; (8) Sitala Mata and (9) Tulja Bhavani.

Lest this list of Rajasthani Goddesses or Matas attested by Tod should lead the reader to differentiate them as being principally Indo-Aryan one of them being special to Maharashtra, I have to draw his attention to the vivid description of the rite of banishing Mari, the goddess of cholera, observed at Kotah about A.D. 1817.[56] Mari is no other than Mariai of Maharashtra and Mariamman of Tamilnad.

Tod's appraisal of the significance of Devis or Matas in the life of Rajasthan, especially of its leading noble or royal families, though in its comparative estimation may not be authoritative, will support my contention about the integrative role of Devi-worship in the religio-cultural history of India. Observes Tod:[57] ". . . . for such is the affinity between the mythology of India, Greece and Egypt, that a bare recapitulation of the numerous surnames of the Hindu goddess of abundance would lead us beyond reasonable limits; all are forms of Parvati or Durga Mata, the Mater Moutana of Greece and Rome, an epithet of Cybele or Vesta, as the guardian goddess of children, one of the characters of the Rajput 'mother of the mount' whose shrine crowns many a pinnacle in Mewar. . . . In short, her power is manifested under every form from the birth, and all the intermediate stages until death; whether Janavi, Gauri or the terrific Kali, the Proserpine or Kallingeneia of the West. Whoever desire to witness one of the most imposing and pleasing of Hindu festivals, let him repair to Udaipur, and behold the rites of the lotus-queen Padma (Padmavati), the Gauri of Rajasthan."

At Jaipur among 300 odd temples I find 13 to be Devi temples, rather low in the order of importance. The Goddesses that figure in them are (1) Annapurna, (2) Chowth Mata, (3) Chawanda Mata, (4) Ganga, (5) Jeewan Mata, (6) Kali, (7) Kalika and (8) Mahalakshmi.

In Panjab the temples visited by people are either of Vishnu, Siva, Devi or Bir (Sidh); but favourite worship among the lower castes such as Kolis and Dhanak is generally that of Devi, Bhairav or Guga.[58] The temple of

'Lakshana' Devi at Brahmaur and that of 'Sakti' at Chhatrarhi in Chamba are assigned to about A.D. 700. Among other Devis receiving veneration from the Panjabis of Mandi figure : (1) Sri Vidya, (2) Bala, (3) Kali, (4) Tara, (5) Bagla and (6) Durga or Bhavani.[59]

Contemporary India identifies Bengal with Devi-worship, the Durga puja festival having been known as the one observed with the greatest eclat there. The number of Devi-temples recorded in the *Gazetteers* of Bengal more than justifies this estimate. In the four districts of Hooghly, Manbhum, Nadia and Santal Parganas out of the fifty temples listed in their *Gazetteers*, 14 are noted as consecrated to Devis. About ten of them have been named and they are: (1) Annapurna, (2) Bagla Devi, (3) Kali, (4) Hansesvari, (5) Parvati, (6) Sarasvati, (7) Sarvamangala, (8 Savitri, (9) Ulai Chandi and (10) Durga. Two more Devis, Vasuli Devi and Phullara are noticed as having their temples in the *Gazetteers* of Bankura and Birbhum.[60] 'Phullara' the goddess in the village of Labpur in Birbhum is all too special to Bengal, as close by her temple jackals, regarded as her sacred animals, are fed. 'Vasuli' Devi is believed to be a form of Parvati, though the name appears to be confined to Bengal. 'Delai Chandi,' 'Lakhai Chandi' and 'Thakurani' are, according to Dineschandra Sen[61] some of the other non-Samskritic names of the Mother worshipped in Bengal. The image of Durga at Boram in Manbhum is a life-sized sculpture of eight-armed Devi slaying Mahishasura, so that it is her Mahishasuramardini form. The Hansesvari temple in Hooghly district is most interesting as an illustration of the mutual influence of the two principal sects, Saivism and Vaishnavism. The goddess Hansesvari is sculptured as seated on a lotus, the stalk of which springs from the navel of Siva lying prostrate as Vishnu does in his Seshasayi-form. Last but certainly not the least, comes the famous temple of Kali at Kalighat in Calcutta. It is perhaps the oldest of Devi temples in Bengal. It is believed to have been built about A.D. 1600 and had already become famous in the sixties of the 18th century.[62]

Significance of Devi in the pentad complex comes out best when it is known that leaving out a number of either local, regional or small festivals or fasts observed by women in

India, which are in honour and appeasement of a Goddess or Goddesses, there are two chief festivals kept by Hindus all over India which occur at an interval of six months between them. The one observed in the lunar month Chaitra, though quite often described, particularly in the almanacs of the Indo-Aryan-speaking regions, as 'navaratra', of nine nights' duration, is known as an important festival perhaps only in Rajasthan. The other falling in the lunar month of Asvin, i.e., after the main harvest is ready, is the 'navaratra' *par excellence* and is observed in more or less an identical form among all Hindus in the country.

The festival of Devi in the month of Chaitra is in honour of Gauri, the mild and matron form of Devi. Kunvar Kanaiyaju in his *Vrata Aur Tyauhara* gives the mythology of the festival which is known as 'Gana Gaura' in U.P. and also of another following in the next month which is called 'Asamai ka pujana' worship of the Goddess Asamai. The latter is the same as Annapurna or Parvati in the form of the universal feeder, an aspect which in an earlier quotation from Tod's magnificent account of the observance of the regional female festival of Rajasthan called there 'Ganagaura' is combined with it. At the religious centre of Maharashtra, Pandharpur, there is some observance of this festival in the temple of the Goddess Sakambhari, the vegetable bestowing form, i.e. the Annapurna form of Parvati, when devotees bring to the Goddess offerings of cooked vegetables of sixty-four varieties.[63]

The glowing scene as described by Tod at the end of the first quarter of the nineteenth century being rare in the festival annals of any Indian region deserves to be recorded here and I shall make a small quotation bringing out the salient features of a group-festival of serene joy. Says Tod: "Every wealthy family has its image (of Gauri made of earth) or at least every purwa or subdivision of the city (Udaipur). . . . At length the hour (of departure of Gauri) arrives. . . . The guns on the summit of the castle of Eklinghgarh announce that Gauri has commenced her excursion to the lake. . . The cavalcade assembles on the magnificent terrace, and the Rana, surrounded by his nobles, leads the way to the boats. . . . Here the deformity of vice intrudes not; no object is degraded by inebriation; no tumultuous disorder or deafening clamour,

but all await patiently with eyes directed to the appearance of Gauri. . . . On her approach, the Rana, his chiefs and ministers rise and remain standing till the goddess is seated on her throne close to the water's edge when all bow, and the prince and court take their seats in the boats. The females then form a circle round the image singing hymns, some in honour of the goddess of abundance, others is love and chivalry; and embodying little episodes of national achievements, occasionally sprinkled with *double entendre,* which excites a smile and significant nod from the chiefs and an inclination of the head of the fair choristers."[64]

The autumnal 'navaratra', festival of nine nights, is *par excellence* the Devi festival. First, in some form or another it it observed all over India. Second, it is both a family and a temple festival. Third, during the period of its celebration not only Durga but even more than her, Sarasvati receives worship and offering. Fourth, three[65] of the martial groups of Indian people have celebrated its last day with martial pomp and magnificence. Fifth, that day, the 10th of the bright half of Asvin, significantly named 'vijayadasami', victory-tenth, is believed to have been the day when Rama led his monkey-army in an invasion of Lanka. The festival therefore is better known as Ramalila in parts of North India.[66] Sixth it has been turned into a group and public festival for the whole period of nine days in Bengal where Durga-puja was really a festival of three days. Seventh, it was pressed into the service of politics and nationalism in Bengal like the Ganapati-festival in Maharashtra. And eighth, in the new form of the festival it has already been adopted by Gujarati people of Bombay—I say in the new form because some elements of it, e.g., small girls carrying on their heads perforated small earthenware pots with lighted oil lamps in them and singing a particuar variety of folk-songs and going from door to door blessing the house-people and receiving some presents, were present in Gujarat for ages before.

On the first day, the first also of the bright half of the lunar month Asvin, is prescribed the establishment of an earthenware vessel.[67] Generally on the 6th day Goodess Sarasvati is invoked for installation. The eighth night is special for Durga and Her worship. The ninth is the day for

taking leave of Sarasvati and is laid down as the day of Her worship or/and as the day of 'ayudhapuja', worship of tools and weapons specific for one's profession or trade. In most parts of the country, though the tenth is not officially described as the day for beginning the study of alphabet, yet it has been observed as such, and actually named in popular parlance at least as 'vidyarambha', beginning of studies. Thus in Kerala where only three days of the festival are considered as important, the tenth, the third important day, is particularly auspicious for the beginning of children's education—Vidyarambha."[68]

The Goddess Sarasvati is almost Rigvedic in antiquity and origin. Vak is the Goddess of Speech to whom a great hymn of the *Rigveda* is addressed and she is generally compared with the Logos of the Greeks. Hopkins [69] sees in the epic Goddess Sarasvati a combination of this Goddess of Speech with the River Goddess based on the river of that name. River Sarasvati has been famous in Hindu legendary history. Curiously, however, in the Sutras, as for example in the *Baudhayanagrihyasutra* (I, 8, 39) she appears as a Goddess presiding over embryos. In the later supplement of that work, ascribed to about A.D. 200,[70] along with Sarasvati, who thus stands distinct and not as a personification of speech, figure 'Vakdevi' and 'Girdevi', Goddess of Speech. There is prescribed a special technique and rite for Her as there is one for Durga. And what is very significant for so early a period it is declared to be a rite for the 'beginning of learning'. It is further exhorted that one desirous of acquiring learning should supplicate Sarasvati every month with that rite. In the *Mahabharata* Narada, implying that he worships the Goddess, recommends the worship of Sarasvati among other deities.[71]

Sarasvati figures in the invocation at the beginning of the popular Samskrit work *Panchatantra,* the other female Deities so invoked are 'Sri', the Vedic 'Aditi' and the 'Seven Mothers' of whom only Chandika[72] is named. But a full-fledged invocation to Sarasvati by Herself, though not at the beginning but only after one to Ganesa, occurs in an inscription[73] from Narvad, near Jhansi, lying about 45 miles south of Narwar, which is dated about the 10th or the 11th century A.D.

Ekanatha in the 16th and Ramadas in the 17th century similarly addressed stirring invocations to Sarasvati or Sarada for fluency in expression and even mastery of the subject.

Sarasvati is worshipped for three days in this complex festival is taken leave of on the 9th day. Durga who killed the demon Mahishasura is taken leave of on the 8th night. The tenth is the day of magnificent procession, the day on which one steps out for new enterprises and ventures, a feature which is symbolically enacted by crossing the boundary of the village or the town. Last but not the least, the whole festival is rounded off at least in Maharashtra with the mutual give and take of leaves of 'sami' tree which for the occasion represent gold.

Bengal, the home of Saktism in late mediaeval times, has, for the last four hundred years or so, stressed the Durga, Kali or Chandi component of the complex festival. Till almost the end of the 19th century it was a festival very much like the Ganapati-festival of Maharashtra, being observed by a much smaller number of families but with greater pomp and eclat. The description of it at the beginning of the 19th century given by a British writer[74] makes it clear. Even the description given by the well-known Bengali leader Bipin Chandra Pal as he witnessed the festival in about 1870 to 1880 shows it in the same form. Pal[75] observes: "In my early days, five or six families in our village had the Durga Puja in full form; that is, they set up the image of the Goddess and her companions, and worshipped her for three days with due pomp and circumstance."

Bankimchandra Chaterjee infused a new spirit in the festival. Of him no less a patriot and religious leader than Aurobindo Ghose has said:[76] "Bankim did not forget that self-sacrifice and discipline to be vitally useful must be associated with religious spirit. Selfless duty infused with religious spirit, leading to service of the country is the central idea of his work *Ananda-Matha*. This complex but vital notion is epitomised in one verse in it addressed to Durga-cum-Mother-India beginning with the chant 'Vande Mataram', Bow to Mother. This song has attained the position of an unofficial national anthem. . . . When Bankim wrote this chant about A.D. 1890 it did not catch the ear of the public.

But when the time of national awakening arrived its chant personated the image of Mother India for all of us."

In the days of the partition of Bengal we know that the chant of the song 'Vande Mataram' was prohibited by the new Government of Eastern Bengal. As pointed out in another chapter it was Barendra Kumara Ghose, the brother of Aurobindo and Bhupendranath Dutt, the brother of Swami Vivekananda, who spread the significance of the *Bhagavadgita* and its doctrine of selfless performance of duty in the cause of patriotism and national liberation. In the case of the stirring song composed by Bankim and the image and worship of Durga-Bhavani behind it, it was Aurobindo Ghose himself who made them the vehicle of extremist nationalism. The Earl of Ronaldshay, who was Governor of Bengal observes[77] about a phamphlet entitled 'Bhawani Mandir' believed to have been written by Aurobindo Ghose, "who did more than any one to breathe into the sinister spectre of anarchy the vitalising influence of religion", that is identified Bhawani with Infinite Energy and further equated Durga, Kali and also Radha and Lakshmi with her. The pamphlet further stated: "In the present age the Mother is manifested as the mother of strength." This Devi festival of Navaratra is thus highly complex. It enshrines memories of Rama's glorious deed of disposing of the sinister and evil Ravana. It symbolizes Durga's killing of the demon Mahishasura, another wicked being. It enshrines Sarasvati, the Goddess of Learning and embodies Her prolonged worship. It typifies the undertaking of new enterprises. It also is an occasion for remembering relatives and friends. It is a socializing festival, and one which having been pressed into service for national liberation conveys a significant reminder. It deserves to be observed as a group and public festival by all in India with the same eclat as accompanies it in its observance in Bombay by the Bengalis.

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[13] *Ramayana*, I 23, (10-16); 35-37; *Mbh.* III, 39, 3; P. V. Jagadisa Ayyar, *op. cit.*, p. 21.
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* In South Konkan (Talukas Malwan, Vengurla and Sawantwadi) this day is known as 'Tiparachi purnima'. The transformation of Tripura to the dialectical 'Tipar' has prompted me to consider this Panjabi 'Tukari' as another dialectical form of Tripura.
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[10] Banerjea, *op. cit.*, pp. 448-51, 480-81.
[11] Banerjea, pp. 92-93.
[12] Banerjea, pp. 231-33, 5-6, 546-47; A. H. Longhurst, *M.A.S.J.* 33, Pallava Architecture II, pp. 5-6; C. V. Narayana Ayyar, *Origin and Early History of Saivism in South India*, (1936), pp. 149-50; P. V. Jagadisa Ayyar, South *Indian Shrines*, 1922, pp. 227-228.
[13] *Op. cit.*, p. 165.
[14] Pathak pp. 6-7, 18, 26.
[15] D. C. Sircar, *op. cit.*, pp. 269-270 and f.n.
[16] *Ibid.*, p. 259. Rendering mine.
[17] *Harshacharita*, III, para 15.
[18] *Harshacharita, Ek Samskritic Adhyayana*, p. 56.
[19] Sircar, *op. cit.*, pp. 274-78, 300-07, 313, 315, 318-19, 321-22, 326-27, 377-78.
[20] Sircar, *op. cit.*, pp. 418-19.
[21] *Ibid.*, pp. 400-01.
[22] *Ibid.*, pp. 386, 394-95.
[23] *Op. cit.*, p. 1.
[24] *Ibid.*, pp. 219-21, 229.
[25] *Ibid.*, p. 433, and f.n. 3.
[26] *Ibid.*, pp. 450-53.
[27] Sircar *op. cit.*, p. 447, f.n. 2.
[28] D. C. Sircar, *op. cit.*, pp. 278-9.
[29] *Meghaduta*, vv. 42-44.
[30] *Ibid.*, vv. 33-36.

Chapter 4

[1] Sircar, *op. cit.*, p. 451.
[2] *Malavikagnimitra*, *Vikramorvasiya* and *Sakuntala* in that order. I have left out all internal references to Sivah in these works and also in the great poems *Raghuvamsa* and *Kumarasambhava* as well as in the lyric *Meghaduta*.
* The Samskrit word for it is in masculine gender.
[3] *Harshacharita*, I, paras 6 and 10; II, para 10.
[4] R. G. Bhandarkar, *op. cit.*, p. 168.
[5] *Malatimadhava*, III, 6-15.
* A temple of Kalapriya at Kanauj or at Ujjain is recorded to have been damaged by the elephants of the Rashtrakuta king Indra III when he routed the Gurjara Pratihara king of Kanauj. (*Memoirs, Arch. Survey of India*, No. 23, p. 10; V. B. Mishra in *Annals, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, 1959, p. 238.)
[6] C. V. Narayana Ayyar, *Origin and Early History of Saivism in South India*, 1936, pp. 120 ff.

7 Narayana Ayyar, *op. cit.*, pp. 123-33, 179, 181, 305-08; P. V. Jagadisa Ayyar, *op. cit.*, pp. 214-17.
8 Narayana Ayyar, *op. cit.*, pp. 172-3, 180, 183, 398-404, 447-8, 455-57; Jagadisa Ayyar, pp. 215-18, 405-06, 478, 483-5, 506.
9 Ghurye, *Caste, Class And Occupation*, pp. 319 ff.
10 *Gopinath Rao, II*, pl. I, pls. XXX, XXXIII.
11 *Meghaduta*, vv. 34-36.
12 *Ep. Indica*, XIV, p. 156.
13 Gopinath Rao, II, pl. I, pls. XXXVII-XL.
14 Srinivasan, pp. 81-82; G. H. Khare, *op. cit.*, p. 116.
15 Jagadisa Ayyar, *op. cit.*, pp. 309-10, 363; Pathak, *op. cit.*, pp. 29-37.
16 Pathak, p. 45.
17 Ghurye, *Bharata-natya And Its Costume*, pp. 50-52.
18 *Iconography of Brahmanical Images in the Dacca Museum*, pp. 115 ff.
19 Jagadisa Ayyar, p. 204; Srinivasan, *op. cit.*, p. 81.
20 Jagadisa Ayyar, *op. cit.*, pp. 402-3; Narayana Ayyar, *op. cit.*, pp. 139-42.
21 Jagadisa Ayyar, *op. cit.*, pp. 291-3, 208, 213, 16, 42, f.n. 1; Narayana Ayyar, *op. cit.*, pp. 171-2; Srinivasan, *op. cit.*, p. 74; Gopinath Rao, II, pl. I, p. 208, and pl. XXXV (5); Banerjea, *op. cit.*, p. 485.
22 Jagadisa Ayyar, *op. cit.*, pp. 144, 346; Srinivasan, *op. cit.*, pl. 68; Narayana Ayyar, pp. 204-11, 242-46, 264-67; *Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India*, No. 40, pp. 21-22.
23 *Memoirs of the Arch. S. of India*, No. 33, pl. XVI; also reproduced by G. H. Khare *loc. cit.*, pl. 39; Srinivasan, *op. cit.*, pl. 57,
24 G. H. Khare, *Murtivijana*, pls. 37, 38, 41, 43, 44, 46; Banerjea, pls. XXXVI, XXXVII, XXXIX, XL; Srinivasan, *op. cit.*, pls. 54, 55, 72.
25 *Op. cit.*, p. 73; Jagadisa Ayyar, *op. cit.*, p. 143 and f.n. 1; Gopinath Rao, II, pl. I, pls. XVIII 1 and 2, XIX, XX, XXII, XXIII.

Chapter 5

1 *Chhandogya Upanishad*, VII, 26.
2 *Manavagrihyasutra*, trans. by M. J. Dresden (1941), II, 14; *Baudhayanadharmasutra* in *Sacred Laws of the Aryas* (Sacred Books of the East Series) II, 5, 9(8).
3 X, 23-4, 31.
4 *Loc. cit.*, II, 7 and III, 8; IV, 2.
5 *Loc. cit.*, IV, 72; V, 3.
6 *Ramayana*, I, 36, I, 37, II, 25; *Mahabharata*, III, 232; *Vayupurana*, II, 11, 20-50.
7 *Satapatha Brahmana*, I, 1, 3; III, 1, 3; IV, 1, 3; V, 5, 5; *Chhandogya Upanishad*, I, 2; VIII, 6-12.
* Even with this supposition the account cannot be squared up in genealogical sequence. Krishna fought with Bana, the son of Bali. If Vishnu in his Vamana incarnation sent down Bali, it is clear there would not have been sufficient time for two of Vishnu's in-

carnations, viz. Parasurama and Rama, to have taken place before he reappeared as Krishna.

[8] Hopkins, *op. cit.*, pp. 178-80, 49-50, 133.

[9] Chitrav, *op. cit.*, pp. 78-9.

[10] *Ibid.*, pp. 432-33.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 373.

[12] Hopkins, *op. cit.*, pp. 206-07; Chitrav, *op. cit.*, pp. 157-8, 301 (Nikumbha), 325 (Parvati); Sampurnanand, *Ganesa* (in Hindi), (1944), pp. 8-10; Gopinath Rao, I, pp. 35-45.

[13] *Vayupurana*, XXX, 182 (Siva's epithets); Hopkins, *op. cit.*, p. 221; Chitrav, *op. cit.*, pp. 413-14 (Bhuta); Banerjea, *op. cit.*, p. 356.

[14] So it is stated in *Brahmanda purana*, III, 42 as referred to by Chitrav, *op. cit.*, p. 311. But Bhavabhuti (8th century A.D.) in his *Mahaviracharita*, II, 38 appears to imply that Ganesa had lost his one tooth even before his encounter with Parasurama and fought with the latter with the broken tooth as his weapon.

[15] R. G. Bhandarkar, *op. cit.*, pp. 210-12; Banerjea, *op. cit.*, pp. 354-55.

[16] Hopkins, *op. cit.*, p. 133; *Vayupurana*, Vol. II, 30, 36-51.

[17] *Mbh.* III, 65, 23; *Ram.*, VI, 128, 113.

[18] *Vayupurana*, I, 30, 309.

[19] Trans. by M. J. Dresden (1941), II, 14.

[20] *Sacred Laws of the Aryas* (S.B.E. Series), II, 5, 9(7); Chitrav, vide "*Baudhayana*," p. 385.

[21] III, 10.

[22] Banerjea, *op. cit.*, p. 357.

[23] *Memoirs, Archaeological Survey of India*, No. LXX, p. 15; No. XVI, pp. 2, 13, pl. XV.

[24] See P. V. Kane's edition of *Harshacharita*, p. 244 of notes.

[25] Banerjea, *op. cit.*, p. 231.

[26] *Ep. Indica*, XII, pp. 73-77.

[27] Sampurnananda, *op. cit.*, pp. 37-8.

[28] R. G. Bhandarkar, *loc. cit.*,

[29] *Loc. cit.*, II, 17, 33, 34, 35, 38.

[30] Hopkins, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

[31] *Ramayana*, IV, 43, 26; Hopkins, *op. cit.*, p. 227.

[32] *Meghduta*, 57.

[33] *Op. cit.*, p. 157 (Ganapati).

[34] Pathak, *op. cit.*, p. 56; Panigrahi in *J.R.A.S.B.*, Letters, 1951, p. 107; Banerjea, *op. cit.*, pp. 364, 366.

[35] D. C. Sircar, *op. cit.*, pp. 279, 298, 317, 453; Banerjea, *op. cit.*, pp. 141-54, 362-66; Hopkins, *op. cit.*, pp. 227-29; Panigrahi in *J.R.A.S.B. Letters*, 1951, pp. 106-07.

[36] *Inscriptions in the Kaluchuri Chedi Era*, I, pp. CXLVIII.

[37] Hopkins, *op. cit.*, p. 227; Banerjea, *op. cit.*, pp. 141-43; Majumdar and Altekar, *Vakalaka Gupta Age*, pp. 28-31.

[38] Pathak, *op. cit.*, pp. 27, 56; *Ep. Indica*, I, pp. 273-84.

[39] R. D. Banerji in *Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India*, No. 25, pp. 2-4.

Chapter 6

[1] *Ep. Indica*, I, pp. 104, 115.
[2] R. G. Bhandarkar's edition of *Malatimadhava*, p. XXI.
[3] K. S. Madhavasastri in his edition of *Malatimadhava*.
[4] D. R. Bhandarkar in *Arch. Survey of India, Annual Report*, 1908-09, p. 115.
[5] Banerjea, *op. cit.*, p. 356.
[6] R. G. Bhandarkar, *Vaishnavism, etc.* in *Collected Works*, IV, p. 212; Banerjea, *op. cit.*, p. 356.
[7] *Ep. Indica*, I, pp. 351-54.
[8] *Ep. Indica*, XII, pp. 250 ff.
[9] V. V. Mirashi, *Inscriptions in the Chedi Kalachuri Era*, pp. 483-88.
[10] *Ep. Indica*, I, p. 289.
[11] Mirashi, *op. cit.*, pp. 314-18.
[12] *Ibid.*, pp. 512-16.
[13] *Ibid.*, p. 343.
[14] *Ibid.*, p. 317.
[15] *Ep. Indica*, I, p. 341; *Ind. Antiquary* XIV, pp. 68-9.
[16] *Ep. Indica*, I, p. 280.
[17] *Memoirs, Arch. Survey of India*, No. 40, pp. 4, 17.
[18] *Memoirs, Arch. Survey of India*, No. 33, p. 49.
[19] *Transactions of the Literary Society of Bombay*, III, pp. 310-11; *Arch. Survey of W. I.*, V, p. 26; Alice Getty, *Ganesa*, pp. 30-1; Mirashi, *op. cit.*, p. cxxxiii.
[20] *Arch. Survey of India, An. Report*, 1909-10, pp. 93-4.
[21] *Ep. Indica*, IX, p. 160; Getty, *Ganesa*, p. 30; Jagadisa Ayyar, *op. cit.*, pp. 206, 482; *Ind. Ant.* XLV, p. 152. *Dist. Gazetteer of Manbhum*, p. 269.
[22] H. Consens, *The Chalukyan Architecture of the Kanarese Districts*, 1926, pp. 21-2.
[23] *Op. cit.*, pp. 150-60.
[24] *Op. cit.*, p. 13.
[25] *Op. cit.*, pp. 346-47, 356-57, fig. 78.
[26] *Op. cit.*, p. 88 and pl. 76.
[27] *Op. cit.*, pp. 53, 55.
[28] *Ibid.*, pp. 222, 224, 175, 225.
[29] *Op. cit.*, pp. 20-23.
[30] Jagadisa Ayyar, *op. cit.*, pp. 392-93.
[31] *Ibid.*, pp. 436, 389-90; Srinivasan, *op. cit.*, p. 89.
[32] Jagadisa Ayyar, *op. cit.*, p. 370.
[33] Gopinath Rao, II, p. 350; Banerjea, *op. cit.*, pp. 255- ; Srinivasan, *op. cit.*, p. 91.
[34] Jagadisa Ayyar, *op. cit.*, pp. 474-76.
[35] From notes of field-work done by M. N. Srinivas as my research

assistant in the Department of Sociology, University of Bombay, during the years 1942-43.

[36] Jagadisa Ayyar, *op. cit.*, pp. 320-43.

[37] *Ibid.*, p. 342.

[38] Banerjea, *op. cit.*, p. 367.

[39] *Bengal District Gazetteers, Hooghly,* 1910, p. 105.

[40] *Op. cit.*, p. 364.

[41] S. C. Bose, *Hindus As They Are,* p. 55, and fn.

[42] *Op. cit.*, pp. 89-90.

[43] *Ibid.*, p. 92.

[44] *Op. cit.*, pp. 86-87, 89.

[45] *Op. cit.*, I, pt. I, pp. 47-8.

[46] *Madras District Gazetteers, Trichinopoly,* I, p. 88.

[47] *Iconography of Buddhist and Brahmanical Sculptures in the Dacca Museum,* 1929, p. 144.

[48] R. G. Bhandarkar, *op. cit.*, pp. 212-13.

[49] Bhattasali, *op. cit.*, p. 144; Banerjea, *op. cit.*, p. 361 and f.n.; *Dist. Gaz. of Bengal, Burdwan,* p. 186; *Santhal Parganas,* p. 256.

[50] Sampurnanand, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

[51] *E. R. E.*, Vol. VI, p. 176; Hultzsch, *South Indian Inscriptions,* Introduction, 1916, p. 36.

[52] *The Times of India,* 26/5/1953, 28/5/1953.

Chapter 7

[1] *Dasabodha,* (Marathi), VI, 6, 24.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 14.

[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 41.

[4] *Census of India,* 1901, *Travancore Report,* p. 98; Grierson in ERE, VI, p. 175.

[5] *E.R.E.*, vide Ganesa.

[6] *The Jaina Community,* pp. 3-5.

* I am unable to explain this name, and no comment is available in the source of information.

[7] Mirashi, *op. cit.*, pp. 533-42.

[8] Pandit Harikshen Kaul in *Census of India,* 1911, *Panjab Report,* p. 112.

[9] G. R. Pradhan in *Journal of the University of Bombay,* pt. IV, 1939, 1940, 1941, pp. 13-14, 5 and 148-51 respectively.

[10] *Namdevacha Gatha* (in Marathi), I, 2.

[11] *Jnanesvari,* XIII, 819.

[12] XIV, 56-72. I owe this reference to my friend Prof. M. V. Dhond.

[13] *Op. cit.*, I, 82.

[14] *Loc. cit.*, I, 20, XI, 49-50.

[15] *Ratnagiri District Gazetteer,* p. 335.

[16] Details of practice of this festival in Tamilnad, Andhradesa and Mysore-Karnatak are taken from notes of fieldwork carried out

by M. N. Srinivasa as my research assistant in the Department of Sociology in the years 1942-43.

17 *After a Century and a Quarter*, p. 57.

18 K. P. Kulakarni's edition of *Vivekasindhu*, 1957, pp. 1, 76, 54-5,

19 *Jnanesvari*, X, 6.

20 *Namadevacha Gatha*, 5.

21 See the writer's *Indian Sadhus* (1954).

22 Hajariprasad Dwivedi, *Natha Sampradaya*, (in Hindi), 1950, pp. 148-53.

23 Chitrav, *Madhyayugina Charitrakosa* (in Marathi), p. 354.

24 *District Gazetteer*, pp. 252-4.

Chapter 8

1 V. S. Bendrey, *Tukarama Maharaja Yanchi Santa Sangati* (in Marathi), 1958, pp. 125-30. Mr. Bendrey's bold and laudable attempt to cut through the jungle of fantastic dates and longevities claimed for this man and some of his descendants suggests these dates. His calculations are based on some Marathi documents of a historical nature. He has not used Captain Edward Moor's statements. Moor was in Poona in 1800 A.D. in the British embassy. He visited Chinchwad to see "hereditary living Deity" of the place. He tells his readers that Moroba's "annunciation" happened in 1640 A.D. and that his son Chintamana stepped into the "godly estate" of Chinchwad in 1650 A.D. (*Asiatic Researches*, VII, pp. 381-82.)

2 *Transactions of the Literary Society of Bombay*, vol. III, 1823, pp. 69-78. The names of the persons after Dharanidhara I given by Moor, by Sykes and by Bendrey do not tally; but I do not propose to go into the family history which is not necessary for the topic dealt with here.

3 *Poona District Gazetteer* (Revised ed. 1954), p. 685.

4 *Ibid.*, pp. 671, 676.

5 *Ibid.*, p. 658.

6 *Selections from Peshwa Daftar*, vol. 22, p. 191.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 108.

8 *Asiatic Researches*, VII, p. 384.

9 Moor, *op. cit.*, p. 388.

10 *Gazetteer of Poona*, vol. III.

11 *Ibid.*, I, p. 247, f.n. 4, Italics are mine.

12 It is based on the following passages in *Dasabodha* (in Marathi), I, 2; II, 1; IV, 1 and 5; VII, I; XVIII, 1.

13 See my *Vidyas; a Homage to Comte and a Contribution to the Sociology of Knowledge.*

14 *Op. cit.*, *Dasabodha*, VII, 9, 13.

15 *Tukaramachi Gatha*, vv. 401, 537, 1806.

16 Vad, *Peshwa's Diaries, V, Bajirao II*, pp. 284-309.

[17] For this deity see the author's *After a Century and a Quarter* (1960).
[18] For a preliminary reporting of its contents see *Sociological Bulletin,* September, 1960.
[19] See my *After a Century and a Quarter* (1960).
[20] *Loc. cit.*, IV, 5, 7.
[21] See my *After a Century and a Quarter* (1960).
[22] N. G. Chapekar, *Jivanakatha* (autobiography) (in Marathi), 1943, p. 281.
[23] N. C. Kelkar, *Lokmanya Tilakanche Charitra, Khanda I* (in Marathi), 1923, p. 344.
[24] See my *After a Century and a Quarter* (1960).
[25] N. C. Kelkar, *op. cit.*, pp. 348-49.
[26] *Ibid.*, pp. 418-25.

Chapter 9

[1] *Op cit.*, p. 67.
* This formula is current in Maharashtra at least.
[2] *Manu, I,* 10-12; *Vayupurana,* I, 6, 1-6.
[3] R. G. Bhandarkar, *op. cit.*, pp. 43-45.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 47; also cf. *Katha Upanishad, III,* 9.
[5] R. G. Bhandarkar, *op. cit.*, p. 48.
[6] *Raghuvamsa,* X, 5-33.
[7] D. C. Sircar, *op. cit.*, pp. 377-79.
[8] *Ibid.*, pp. 443-4; Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture,* Vol. I, p. 56; *Ramayana,* I, 6, 1-4.
[9] R. G. Bhandarkar, *op. cit.*, pp. 12, 60; Sircar, *op. cit.*, p. 186.
[10] *Memoirs of the Arch. Survey of India,* 70, pp. 5, 10, 15; J. N. Banerjea, *op. cit.*, pp. 406-07; pl. XXII.
[11] *Memoirs of the Arch. Survey of India,* 25, p. 2 and pl. XI.
[12] *Op. cit.*, I, pt. 1, pl. XXXIII; *op. cit.*, pl. 24.
[13] Rao, I, p. 113.
[14] *Vayupurana,* I, 25.
[15] For reproduction see J. N. Banerjea, *op. cit.*, pl. XXV.
[16] D. C. Sircar, p. 396; Banerjea, *op. cit.*, p. 414 and pl. XXV.
[17] J. N. Banerjea, *op. cit.*, pp. 531-32; pl. XXVIII.
[18] Majumdar and Altekar, *Vakataka Gupta Age,* pp. 85, f.n; 173; 303; 304; J. N. Banerjea, *op. cit.*, pp. 194-97.
[19] Majumdar and Altekar, *loc. cit.*, p. 302.
[20] D. C. Sircar, *op. cit.*, pp. 278-319.
[21] Gopinath Rao, I, pt. I, p. 75.
[22] See Ghurye, *Family and Kin in Indo-European Culture.*
[23] Sircar, *op. cit.*, p. 377.
[24] Banerjea, *op. cit.*, pp. 275, 406.
[25] *Op. cit.*, p. 406.
[26] Jagadisa Ayyar, *op. cit.*, p. 462.
[27] Jagadisa Ayyar, *op. cit.*, p. 410.

[28] See pls. 21 and 46 in Srinivasan, *op. cit.*, pl. 27 in Khare, *op. cit.*
[29] Srinivasan, *op. cit.*, pl. 20 and p. 43; Banerjea, *op. cit.*, pp. 400-406; R. G. Bhandarkar, *op. cit.*, p. 74.
[30] Khare, G. H., *op. cit.*, p. 53; Banerjea, *op. cit.*, pp. 414-15.
[31] See reproduction in Longhurst, *op. cit.*, or Srinivasan, *op. cit.* pl. 29.
[32] *Op. cit.*, p. 211.
[33] *Op. cit.*, p. 192.
[34] Percy Brown, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-7.
[35] M. S. Vats, *M.A.S.J. No.* 70. p. 12; Banerjea, pp. 416-17.
[36] Khare, *op. cit.*, pl. 10.
[37] As quoted by Banerjea, *op. cit.*, p. 416.
[38] Reproduced by Srinivasan, *op. cit.*, pl. 32.
[39] *Gazetteer of Trichinopoly,* p. 278; Jagadisa Ayyar, *op. cit.*, p. 490.
[40] *Op. cit.*, pp. 47-8.
[41] Srinivasan, p. 47; Ayyar, pp. 563-5.
[42] Ayyar, p. 614.
[43] *Op. cit.*, fig. 238.
[44] *Ibid.*, p. 554.
[45] J. Ayyar, *op. cit.*, p. 617.
[46] R. G. Bhandarkar, *op. cit.*, pp. 82-3.
[47] *Op. cit.*, p. 529.

Chapter 10

[1] *Loc. cit.*, II, 36, 87-98.
[2] Hopkins, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-17; R. G. Bhandarkar, *op. cit.*, p. 49; Khare, *op. cit.*, p. 47; Banerjea, *op. cit.*, pp. 419, 421-4.
[3] F. E. Pargiter, *Dynasties of the Kali Age,* charts.
[4] *Op. cit.*, p. 213.
[5] Banerjea, *op. cit..*, p. 395.
[6] R. C. Majumdar, *The History of Bengal,* Vol. I, 1943, p. 400.
[7] R. G. Bhandarkar, *op. cit.*, pp. 12, 18; Banerjea, *op. cit.*, p. 85; Vasudevasaran Agarvala, *op. cit.*, pl.
[8] Banerjea, *op. cit.*, pp. 90-94, 338; R. G. Bhandarkar, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-18.
[9] *Family and kin in Indo-European Culture,* (2nd Ed.
[10] Moti Chandra in *Ghurye Felicitation Volume,* pp. 262-4.
[11] *Loc. cit.*, II, 35, 1-2.
[12] Banerjea, *op. cit.*, pp. 423-4, pl. XXII, (4); Khare, *op. cit.*, p. 47, pl. 11.
[13] Patil, D. R., *Cultural History From the Vayu Purana,* 1946, p. 15.
[14] *Vayupurana,* II, 36, 96-8.
[15] Hopkins, *op. cit.*, p. 216 and fn.; Bhandarkar, *op. cit.*, p. 51; Banerjea, *op. cit.*, p. 421.
[16] Srinivasan, *op. cit.*, pl. 39, p. 53; Jagadisa Ayyar, *op. cit.*, pp. 162-3.
[17] E. Sachau, *Alberuni's India,* vol. II, p. 182.
[16] Jarrett, *Aini-Akbari,* vol. I, p. 320; III, p. 216.

[19] *Op. cit.*, pp. 49-51.
[20] *Op. cit.*, p. 216.
[21] *Op. cit.*, p. 53. In his f.n. Bhandarkar refers to p. 981 of the *J.R.A.S.* for 1907.
[22] See *Caste, Class and Occupation*, (1961).
[23] *Op. cit.*, p. 421.
[24] A. D. Pusalkar, places him even earlier; see his *Bhasa, a Study*.
[25] B. Mullick *Krishna and Krishnaism*, 1898,
[26] See my *Indian Costume*, pl. 188; pp. 95, 99.
[27] Srinivasan, *op. cit.*, p. 55.
[28] Jagadisa Ayyar, *op. cit.*, p. 181, f.n.; Srinivasan, pl. 37.
[29] Jagadisa Ayyar, *op. cit.*, p. 182, fig. 31.
[30] Hopkins, *op. cit.*, pp. 70, 217.
[31] *After A Century And A Quarter*, 1960.
[32] Notes of the field-work carried out by M. N. Srinivas as my research assistant in the Dept. of Sociology in 1942, 1943; *Manual of Nellore*, p. 188.
[33] *Gatha Saptasati*, I, 89; V 47.
[34] R. G. Bhandarkar, *op. cit.*, p. 88, f.n. 3; 91.
[35] *E. R. E.*, IX, p. 373.
[36] *Op. cit.*, p. 53.
[37] *Loc. cit.*, p. 119.
[38] *Nadia Dist. Gazetteer*, pp. 164, 171, 190.
[39] *Birbhum Dist. Gaz.*, p. 111; *Hooghly Dist. Gaz.*, pp. 263, 317; *Nadia Dist. Gaz.*, p. 170. In July 1961 it was reported in the *Times of India* (15th) that over 60000 people had gathered for the festival at Puri
[40] *Op. cit.*, pp. 114, 116;
[41] S. K. De, *Vaishnava Faith and Movement*, (1942), pp. 418-19.
[42] *Bhagavadgita*, XI, 41.
[43] R. S. Pandit's translation of *Rajatarangini*, V, 124-5.
[44] Jagadisa Ayyar, *op. cit.*, pp. 27, 29, 39; Srinivasan, *op. cit.*, p. 54.
[45] Jagadisa Ayyar, *op. cit.*, p. 550, fig. 182.
[46] *Op. cit.*, VIII, 2224-2257.
[47] *Indian Unrest*, 1910, pp. 79, 90, 91. Cf. The Earl of Ronaldshay, *The Heart of Aryavarta*, 1925, p. 126.

Chapter 11

[1] R. G. Bhandarkar, *op. cit.*, pp. 15-16.
[2] *Ramayana, I*, 75-76.
[3] *XLI*, 115-6.
[4] *II*, 36, 91; 26, 181-196.
[5] *Ramacharitamanasa*, VIII, 63; VII, 45-55.
[6] J. N. Banerjea, *op. cit.*, p. 421; M.S. Vats, *op. cit.*, pl. XVI.
[7] Majumdar and Altekar, *Vakataka-Gupta* Age, 1946, p. 112; Sircar, *op. cit.*, p. 415.
[8] *Rajatarangini*, IV, 323-7, 335.

[9] *Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India*, No. 26, p. 5.
[10] James Burgess, *A Guide to Elura Cave Temples*, pp. 25, 31-2; John B. Seely, *The Wonders of Ellora*, 1824, pp. 162, 309.
[11] V. V. Mirashi, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 146-9.
[12] V. S. Pathak, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-7.
[13] V. V. Mirashi, *op. cit.*, pp. 450-1.
[14] *Ibid.*, pp. 349-52.
[15] S. Chitrava, *Madhyayugina Charitrakosa* (in Marathi), p. 351.
[16] *Family and Kin in Indo-European Culture*, 2nd Ed., pp. 87-93.
[17] R. G. Bhandarkar, *op. cit.*, p. 66.
[18] *Indian Sadhus*, p. 67.
[19] *Op. cit.*, p. 94.
[20] See my *Indian Sadhus*, pp. 65.
[21] Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture*, I, 107.
[22] See B. V. Bhat, *Maharashtradharma* (in Marathi), 1925, pp. 144-49; V. L. Bhave, *Maharashtra Sarasvata* (in Marathi), 1924, p. 267.
[23] *Dasabodha* (in Marathi), X, 4, 41-3; XIV, 2; XV, 2, 3-4; XVIII, 6, 6-22; Bhat, *ibid.*, pp. 85-88.
[24] G. H. Khare, *op. cit.*, pp. 2-14.
[25] *Poona Dist. Gazetteer*, (2nd ed.), p. 676.
[26] R. G. Bhandarkar, *op. cit.*, p. 66.
[27] *District Gazetteer*, p. 256.
[28] See pl. 35 on p. 50 in Srinivasan's book, *A Handbook of South Indian Images*; fig. 138 on p. 493 of Jagadisa Ayyar's book *South Indian Shrines*.
[29] *Op. cit.*, pp. 50-1.
[30] *Op. cit.*, p. 51.
[31] Jagadisa Ayyar, *op. cit.*, p. 324.
[32] *Loc. cit.*, pp. 257-83.
[33] *Loc. cit.*, p. 195.
[34] *Manual of Cuddapah District*, 1875, pp. 238-40.
[35] *Loc. cit.*, vol. 43, p. 33.
[36] Notes of field-work carried out by M. N. Srinivasa as my research assistant in the Department of Sociology in the years 1942, 1943.
[37] *Ramayana*, IV, 14-18.
[38] *Mahaviracharita*, IV, vv. 9-10; V, vv. 34-36.
[39] *Ramacharitamanasa*, IV, 18-20.
[40] *Ramayana*, VI, 112-115.
[41] *Ramayana*, VI, 116.
[42] *Ramayana*, VI, 118.
[43] *Op. cit.*, VI, 263-67.
[44] *Ramayana*, VII, 42-3.
[45] *Ramayana*, VII, 48 and 50-1.
[46] *Raghuvamsa*, XIV, 61-67.
[47] *Raghuvamsa*, XIV, 72-73.

[48] *Uttararamacharita,* I, vv. 44-51.
[49] *Ramacharitamanasa,* VIII, 10-11.
[50] *Ibid.,* VIII, 16-19.
[51] *Ramayana,* VII, 93-95.
[52] *Ibid.,* VII, 96-97.
[53] *Raghuvamsa,* XV, 61-85.
[54] *Uttararamacharita,* VII.
[55] *Ramacharitamanasa,* VIII, 60-62.

Chapter 12

[1] See my *Indian Sadhus.*
[2] W. Crooke, *Religion and Folklore in North India,* 1926, p. 162.
[3] *Bombay Gazetteer, Dharwar,* pp. 754-5.
[4] Rao, I, pp. 252-4; Khare, p. 39.
[5] *Op. cit.,* p. 501 and f.n.
[6] *Op. cit.,* Vol. I, p. 255.
[7] Vide Chakradhara in Chitrav's *Madhyayugainacharitrakosa.*
[8] He was then my research assistant in the Department of Sociology and was on a tour of investigation for a preliminary reporting of which see *Sociological Bulletin,* Sept., 1960.
[9] II.
[10] V. S. Pathak, *op. cit.,* p. 26.
[11] *Rajatarangini,* V, 66-67.
[12] *Jnanesvari,* XVIII, 1751-58.
[13] *Dasabodha,* XIV, 2, 5; V, 6, 25-6.
[14] For details about these personalities vide Chitrav's *Madhyayuginacharitrakosa.*
[15] G. G. Tipni's anthology *Ekanatha,* pp. 34-5.
[16] V, 4, 13-20.
[17] *Bombay Gazetteer, Sholapur,* p. 467.
[18] *Loc. cit.,* p. 625.
[19] *Ibid.,* pp. 302-3.
[20] *Ibid.,* p. 259.
[21] Unless otherwise mentioned or indicated the main facts about Vithoba temple and worship at Pandharpur are taken from G. H. Khare's valuable brochure *Sri Vitthala Ani Pandharpura* (in Marathi) 2nd ed., 1953.
[22] Khare, *Ibid.,* p. 18.
[23] *Bombay Gazetteer, Sholapur,* p. 469.
[24] *Bombay State Gazetteer, Poona District,* p. 568.
[25] See my *After a Century and a Quarter,* 1960.
[26] *Ibid.,* pp. 14-15.
[27] *Bombay Gaz., Kolhapur,* pp. 310-1.
[28] *Bombay State Gazetteer, Poona District,* pp. 615, 665.
[29] *Namadevacha Gatha,* vv. 185, 189, 488.
[30] Khare, *Sri Vitthala Ani Pandharpura,* p. 10 and f.n.
[31] *Tukaramachi Gatha,* vv. 268, 3, 3873, 238.

[32] *Ibid.*, vv. 3, 262, 548-9, 836, 1806, 2313-4, 3853-5.
[33] *Ibid.*, v. 962.

Chapter 13

[1] *Op cit.*, p. 51.
[2] Gopinath Rao, *op. cit.*, I, p. 1, pp. 190-1; Srinivasan, *op. cit.*, pp. 50, 61.
[3] Jagadisa Ayyar, *op. cit.*, p. 20.
[4] *Ramayana,* IV, 65-67; V; VI, 74, 100-01, 128, 77-84.
[5] Motichandra in *Ghurye Felicitation Volume,* pp. 262-4.
[6] Hari Kishen Kaul in *Punjab Census Report for* 1911, p. 113.
[7] *Saiva Cults in Northern India,* 1960, pp. 26-7.
[8] *Rajatarangini,* V, 66.
[9] *J. R. A. S.*, 1913, p. 398.
[10] *Loc. cit.*, IV, I, 37.
[11] Hopkins, *op. cit.*, p. 13.
[12] *Loc. cit.*, XII, 60 and 78.
[13] *Mahaviracharita,* V, vv. 30-31.
[14] *Loc. cit.*, I, 32.
[15] *Ep. Indica,* I, pp. 273, 275, 284.
[16] *Loc. cit.*, I, 141.
[17] Chitrav, *Prachinacharitrakosa,* 'Hanuman'.
[18] Chitrav, *Madhyayugina Charitrakosa,* 'Ramananda'.
[19] See my *Indian Sadhus,* pp. 206-08.
[20] *Loc. cit.*, vv. 1834-35.
[21] *Loc. cit.*, VII, 36, 43-46; 108, 29-30.
[22] *Ramacharitamanasa,* VII, 41-2; 75, 7-8; VIII, 7a.
[23] *Op. cit.*, I, pt. 1, pp. 192-3 and pl. LIV.
[24] Jagadisa Ayyar, *op. cit.*, pp. 107, 127.
[25] B. A. Saletore, *Social and Political Life in the Vijayanagar Empire,* Vol. II, 1934, pp. 60, 413.
[26] *Tukaramachi Gatha,* vv. 373-6.
[27] One of Ramadasa's *Karunashtaka* quoted by S. K. Phadke in *Akara Hanumantansin Hitaguja,* 1941, p. 715.
[28] *Dasabodha,* IV, 5, 16; 6, 6.
[29] *Srivitthal Ani Pandharpura,* (in Marathi), 1953, pp. 2-15.
[30] Srinivasan, *op. cit.*, p. 61.
[31] G. H. Khare, *op. cit.*, p. 14.
[32] *Bombay Gazetteers, Poona District,* p. 657.
[33] P. 114.
[34] Jagadisa Ayyar, *op. cit.*, p. 539; Srinivasan, *op. cit.*, p. 61.
[35] *History of Bengali Language and Literature,* p. 879.

Chapter 14

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 226.
[2] Vol. I, p. 110; italics mine.

[3] *Vratakhanda,* XIII.
[4] *Op. cit.,* XVIII, 444-5; XII, 53.
[5] *Op. cit.,* XIII, 819. 'Nav Chandi' is the same as the more standard 'Nav Durga' 'Nine Chandis or Durgas'.
[6] Vol. I, pt. I, pp. 117-8.
[7] *Ibid.,* p. 120; Jagadisa Ayyar, *op. cit.,* pp. 285-6, f.n. 322.
[8] Vol. I, p. 230.
[9] *Gazetter,* vol. I, p. 357.
[10] *Gazetteer of Godavari District,* vol. I, pp. 205, 222, 241, 247-8, 253; *Gazetteer of Vizagapatam District,* vol. I, pp. 293, 315.
[11] *Gazetteer of Salem District,* vol. I, pt. I, pp. 118, 119.
[12] *Gazetteer of Tanjore,* pp. 69, 228, 261, 226-83.
[13] See Viraraghava's comment on v. 17 of Bhavabhuti's *Mahaviracharita,* II.
[14] Ayyar, p. 631; Srinivasan, p. 105; J. N. Banerjea, pp. 370, 485; D. C. Sircar, *op. cit.,* p. 375 and f.n.; Crooke's ed. of *Tod's Annals of Rajasthan,* pp. 665-7.
[15] III, 9.
[16] Srinivasan, p. 105; Banerjea, pp. 382-3.
[17] Khare, *op. cit.,* pp. 179-80; Banerjea, *op. cit.,* pp. 497-500.
[18] Percy Brown, *op. cit.,* p. 95; *M. Arch. S. I.,* 25, p. 4; Fleet, *Gupta Inscriptions,* pp. 227-9; Banerjea, p. 499.
[19] Banerjea, p. 497; B. C. Pal, *Memoirs of My Life and Times,* Vol. I, 1932, p. 127.
[20] Ayyar, p. 294; Banerjea, pp. 497-99.
[21] Ayyar, *op. cit.,* pp. 437, 502, 568; D. C. Sircar, *op. cit.,* pp. 316-17; *Madras District Gazetteers, Malabar,* I, p. 148; M. S. A. Rao, *Social Change in Malabar,* 1957, pp. 151-155; D. C. Sircar in *J. R. A. Soc. B. Letters,* vol. XIV, p. 105; *E.I.* IX, pp. 188-189, 191-2.
[22] *Rajatarangini,* III, 391.
[23] Ayyar, pp. 160, 530, 620.
[24] *Rajatarangini,* IV, 325.
[25] Ayyar, *op. cit.,* pp. 352-3; Gopinath Rao, I, pt. II, pls. CXIII-CXVI; Cousens, *Chalukyan Architecture,* p. 25; *Bombay Gazetteer, Dharwar,* p. 713.
[26] *Murtivijnana* (in Marathi), pp. 183-5.
[27] *Bombay State Gazetteer, Poona District* (Revised edition, (1954), p. 660.
[28] *Op. cit.,* p. 491.
[29] *Ashtadhyayi,* I, 7, 38; IV, 1, 49.
[30] *Op. cit.,* p. 10; Fleet, *Gupta Inscriptions,* pp. 227-9; *E. Indica,* IX, pp. 60-1.
[31] Chitrav, *Madhyayugina Charitrakosa,* vide Mahendrapala.
[32] *Dasabodha,* XVIII, 1, 12; 6, 9.
[33] *Bombay Gazetteers, Sholapur,* p. 442; *Kolhapur,* pp. 309-12.
[34] For a preliminary report see *Sociological Bulletin,* Sept., 1960.

[35] *Sri Vitthala Ani Pandharpur* (in Marathi), pp. 5-15.
[36] This is the same as Sri Mahalaya referred to by Jnanesvara (XVIII, 1803).
[37] *Jnanesvari*, XIII, 818-21; XVIII, 1803; Cf. *Alberuni's India* (Sachau), II, p. 180.
[38] *Namadevacha Gatha*, v. 1864.
[39] *Gatha*, vv. 285-6, 291, 537.
[40] *Dasabodha*, III, 2, 27 and 30; IV, 5, 7 & 16; V, 4, 20; VII, 9, 13; X, 3, 7; XIV, 10, 12; XVIII, 1, 9.
[41] Calculated from the data on pp. 690-787 of *Bombay State Gazetteer, Poona District*; *ibid.*, p. 568. The Marathi almanac evidently did not bother about the Bombay fairs!
[42] II, 72; V, 96.
[43] II, 52, 82-9; 55, 19-20.
[44] R. G. Bhandarkar, *op. cit.*, p. 203; Hopkins, *op. cit.*, p. 224.
[45] V, 3, 29-32.
[46] *Raghuvamsa*, XVI, 4-25.
[47] *Bhagavadgita*, X, 34.
[48] *Op cit.*, p. 53.
[49] I, 9, 75-86; 55, 42-3.
[50] II, 13.
[51] *Op. cit.*, pp. 490-1, 493.
[52] *Bombay Gazetteer, Gujarat Population*, pp. 136, 366, 375, 378.
[53] Tod's *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* (Crooke's ed.), pp. 1444, 1802.
[54] *Ibid.*, pp. 1447-49.
[55] *Ibid.*, pp. 664, 665, 781, 842, 1038, 1125, 1193, 1508, 1512, 1714, 1806, 1809, 1816, 1821.
[56] *Ibid.*, pp. 1733-4.
[57] *Ibid.*, pp. 672-3.
[58] *Panjab Census Report*, 1911, pp. 113-4.
[59] *Panjab States Gazetteer, Chamba*, 1904, pp. 45-6; *Mandi*, pp. 37-9.
[60] *Bengal Gazetteers, Bankura*, p. 164 and *Birbhum*, p. 120.
[61] *History of Bengali Language and Literature*, p. 251.
[62] Monmohan Chakravarti in *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 1909, p. 145.
[63] *Bombay Gazetteers, Sholapur*, p. 439.
[64] *Op. cit.*, pp. 666-67.
[65] Rajputs, Marathas and Mysorians.
[66] *Tod's Annals of Rajasthan*, p. 683; A. C. Mukerji, *Hindu Fasts and Feasts*, pp. 135-38.
[67] For a full description of this festival as observed in rural Deccan see my *After A Century And A Quarter*, 1960. For a detailed description of it in Rajasthan see *Tod's Annals of Rajasthan*, pp. 679-85.
[68] M. S. A. Rao, *Social Change in Malabar*, 1957, p. 152.
[69] *Op. cit.*, p. 53.

[70] *Baudhayanagrihyaseshasutra,* III, 6.

[71] Hopkins, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

[72] It should be noted that in no standard list of 'Seven Mothers' Chandika figures as one.

[73] *Ep. Indica,* I, pp. 351-4.

[74] S. C. Bose, *Hindus As They Are,* 1881, pp. 95-1937.

[75] *Memoirs of my Life and Times,* vol. I, 1932, p. 124. The famous novelist-patriot of Bengal Bankimchandra Chaterjee has described the actual parapharnelia of the prepared image in his novel *Devi Chaudhurani,* 6th section (Marathi version).

[76] From his foreword to the Marathi rendering of Bankim's works styled *Sampurna Bankimchandra,* 1923.

[77] *The Heart of Aryavarta,* 1925, p. 128.

GLOOSSARY OF INDIAN WORDS FOR PRONUNCIATION

Āchārya
Āliṅganamūrti
Ambikā
Ambābāī
Ammā
Annapūrṇā
Ardhanārī
Āryā (Devi)
Āśāpurī
Ashṭabhujā
Avatāra
Bahucharāji
Bāḷāji
Baḷarāma
Bāṇa
Bhagavān
Bhāgavata
Bhagīratha
Bhāṅgyā
Bhāraṅgī
Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa
Bhavabhūti
Bhavāni
Bhū
Brahmā
Chakrapāṇi
Champāshashṭi
Chaṇḍeśānugrahamūrti
Chaṇḍikā
Chintāmaṇi
Dakshiṇāmūrti
Dāmodara
Daśaratha
Dasnāmi
Dattātreya
Deśika
Devī
Divāḷī
Dulyā
Durgā
Dvaimātura
Dvīpāsya
Dwārapāla
Ekadaśana
Ekanātha
Ekapād
Gajamukhāsura
Gajānana
Gajasamhāramūrti
Gajāsura
Gaṇapati
Gāṇapatya
Gaṇādhipati
Gaṇeśa
Gaṇeśapaṭṭi
Gaṅgādhara
Garuḍa
Gāyatrī
Giridhāri
Gokrīḍā
Gokuḷāshṭamī
Gosāi
Govardhanadhāri
Guṇḍāchā
Hāḷāhala
Hanumān
Hayagrīva
Ikshvāku
Īśāna
Jākhmātā
Jānāi
Janārdana
Jarāsamdha
Jnāneśvara
Jogeśvarī
Jyeshṭhā
Kalhaṇa
Kālidāsa
Kāliyā
Kāḷubāī
Kāma
Kānphāṭā

Kārttikeya
Kāsārdevī
Kausalyā
Khaṇḍobā
Khoḍiyār
Kodaṇḍadhāri
Krishṇa
Kshemāryā
Kumāra
Lakaḍi
Lakshmaṇa
Lakshmī
Līlā
Mādhava
Madhvāchārya
Mahābhārata
Mahādeva
Mahālaxmī
Mahārāja
Mahāsena
Maheśa
Maheśvara
Mahishāsuramardinī
Malhārtīrtha
Mallāri
Mallinātha
Mānabhava
Māndhātā
Mārtaṇḍa
Māruti
Mattamayūra
Māya
Mayūra
Medhātithi
Mhasobā
Mirābāi
Mūshakavāhana
Nāmadev
Nārada
Nārāyaṇa
Naṭarāja
Naṭeśvara
Nivduṅgyā
Om, nāma
Onāmā
Onāmāsi
Padmanābha
Padmāvatī
Panchāyatana
Pāṇḍava
Pāṇini
Paraśurāma
Pārthasārathi
Pārvati
Pāsoḍyā
Paśupati
Pishṭāpurī
Prāṇa
Purāṇas
Pushṭimārga
Rādhā
Rādhikā
Rāghava
Rāma
Rāmadāsa
Rāmalīlā
Rāmānanda
Rāmāyaṇa
Rāmeśvara
Raṅganātha
Raṅgaswāmi
Rāvaṇa
Rukmiṇī
Śaiva
Śākambharī
Śakti
Śambhu
Samhāratāṇḍava
Sanatkumāra
Sandhyā
Śaṅkara
Saṅkashṭa
Saptamātrikā
Śāradā
Sarasvatī
Śārṅgadeva
Śarva
Śāstā
Saṭvāi
Savitri (m.)
Sāvitrī (f.)
Śeshaśāyī
Shaḍānana
Shaṇmukha

Sītā
Śītalā
Śiva
Śivarātri
Somāskanda
Sonyā
Śrī
Śrī Ganeśāya
Śrīnivāsa
Śrīraṅga
Sthāṇu
Subrahmaṇya
Śūdraka
Sugrīva
Śūladhara
Sūradāsa
Sūrya
Śveta
Swāmināth a
Tāṇḍava
Tēmalāxi
Trimūrti
Tripurāntaka
Tukārāma
Tukāi
Tulasīdāsa
Umā
Vaḍjāi
Vaishṇava
Vāli
Vālmiki
Vāmana
Varāha
Vāsudeva
Vāsuki
Vidyā
Venkaṭaramaṇa
Venkaṭeśa
Vighnarāja
Vināyaka
Vīra
Vīrabhadra
Virūpāksha
Viśākha
Viśākhadatta
Vishṇu
Viśvāmitra
Viṭhoba
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Vrishākapi
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